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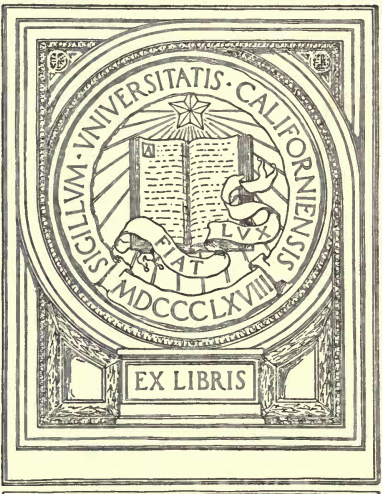

LECTURES

ON THE

CATECHISM

OF THE

CHURCH OF ENGLAND:

WITH

[illegible]

ON

CONFIRMATION.

By THOMAS SECKER, LL.D.
Late Lord Archbishop of Canterbury.

THE FOURTH EDITION.

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VOL. II.

LONDON:
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LECTURE XXII.

The Fifth Commandment.

PART I.

HAVING explained the Precepts of the first Table, which set forth the Duty of Men to God; I now come to those of the Second, which express our several Obligations one to another.

Now the whole Law, concerning these Matters, *is briefly comprehended,* as St. *Paul* very justly observes, *in this* one *Saying, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself* [a]. *Our Neighbour* is every one, with whom we have at any Time any Concern, or on whose Welfare our Actions can have any Influence. For whoever is thus within our Reach, is in the most important Sense near to us, however distant in other Respects. To *love*

[a] Rom. xiii. 9.

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our Neighbour, is to bear him Good-will; which of Courſe will diſpoſe us to think favourably of him, and behave properly to him. And to *love him as ourſelves*, is, to have, not only a real, but a ſtrong and active Good-will towards him; with a Tenderneſs for his Intereſts, duly proportioned to that, which we naturally feel for our own. Such a Temper would moſt powerfully reſtrain us from every Thing wrong, and prompt us to every Thing right; and therefore is *the fulfilling of the Law* [b], ſo far as it relates to our mutual Behaviour.

But becauſe, on ſome Occaſions, we may either not ſee, or not confeſs we ſee, what is right, and what otherwiſe; our Saviour hath put the ſame Duty in a Light ſomewhat different, which gives the ſafeſt, and fulleſt, and cleareſt Direction for Practice, that any one Precept can give. *All Things, whatſoever ye would that Men ſhould do unto you, even ſo do ye unto them* [c]. Behaving properly depends on judging truly; and that, in Caſes of any Doubt, depends on hearing with due Attention both Sides. To our

[b] Ver. 10. [c] Matth. vii. 12.

own

own Side we never fail attending. The Rule therefore is, give the other Side the ſame Advantage, by ſuppoſing it your own: and after conſidering carefully and fairly, what, if it were indeed your own, you ſhould not only deſire (for Deſires may be unreaſonable) but think you had an equitable Claim to, and well-grounded Expectation of, from the other Party, that do in Regard to him. Would we but honeſtly take this Method, our Miſtakes would be ſo exceeding few, and ſlight, and innocent, that well might our bleſſed Lord add, *For this is the Law and the Prophets.*

Yet, after all, there might be Difficulty ſometimes, eſpecially to ſome Perſons, in the Application of a Rule ſo very general. And therefore we have, in the Commandments, the reciprocal Duties of Man to Man branched out into ſix Particulars: The firſt of which, contained in the fifth Commandment, relates to the mutual Obligations of Superiors and Inferiors; the reſt, to thoſe Points in which all Men are conſidered as Equals.

It is true, the Precept, now to be explained, mentions only one Kind of Superiors. *Thou ſhalt honour thy Father and thy Mother.* But the Caſe of other Superiors is ſo like that of Fathers, that moſt of them have occaſionally the very Name of Father given them in moſt Languages; and therefore the Regard, due to them alſo, may be very properly comprehended, and laid before you, under the ſame Head. It is likewiſe true, that the Duty of the Inferior alone is expreſſed in the Commandment; but the correſponding Duty of the Superior is, at the ſame Time, of Neceſſity implied: For which Reaſon I ſhall diſcourſe of both; beginning with the mutual Obligations of Children and Parents, properly ſo called, which will be a ſufficient Employment for the preſent Time.

Now the Duty of Children to their Parents is here expreſſed by the Word *Honour*, which in common Language ſignifies a Mixture of Love and Reſpect, producing due Obedience; but in Scripture Language it implies further, Maintenance and Support, when wanted.

1. Love

1. Love to thoſe, of whoſe Fleſh and Blood we are, is what Nature dictates to us, in the very firſt Place. Children have not only received from their Parents, as Inſtruments in the Hand of God, the Original of their Being; but the Preſervation of it through all the Years of helpleſs Infancy; when the needful Care of them gave much Trouble, took up much Time, and required much Expence; all which, Parents uſually go through, with ſo chearful a Diligence, and ſo ſelf-denying a Tenderneſs, that no Return of Affection on the Childrens Part can poſſibly repay it to the full; though Childrens Affection is what, above all Things, makes Parents happy. Then, as Life goes on, it is their Parents that give or procure for them ſuch Inſtruction of all Kinds, as qualifies them, both to do well in this World, and be for ever bleſſed in another; that watch over them continually with never-ceaſing Attention, conſulting their Inclinations in a Multitude of obliging Inſtances, and bearing with their Perverſeneſs in a Multitude of provoking ones; kindly reſtraining them from a thouſand

pernicious Follies, into which they would otherwiſe fall; and directing their heedleſs Footſteps into the right Way; encouraging, rewarding, and, which indeed is no leſs a Benefit, correcting them alſo, as the Caſe requires; full of Sollicitude all the while for their Happineſs, and conſuming themſelves with Labour and Thoughtfulneſs for theſe dear Objects, to improve, ſupport, and advance them in their Lives, and provide for them at their Deaths. Even thoſe Parents, who perform theſe Duties but imperfectly, who perhaps do ſome very wrong Things, do notwithſtanding, almoſt all of them, ſo many right and meritorious ones; that though, the more ſuch they do, the better they ſhould be loved; yet they that do leaſt, do enough to be loved ſincerely for it, as long as they live [d].

2. And with Love muſt ever be joined, ſecondly, due Reſpect, inward and outward. For Parents, are not only the Benefactors, but in Rank the Betters, and in Right the Governors, of their Children; whoſe Dependance is upon them, in Point of Intereſt,

[d] See Xenophon's Memoirs of Socrates, l. 2. c. 2.

gene-

generally; in Point of Duty, always. They ought therefore to think of them with great Reverence, and treat them with every Mark of Submiſſion, in Geſture, in Speech, in the whole of their Behaviour, which the Practice of wiſe and good Perſons hath eſtabliſhed, as proper Inſtances of filial Regard. And though the Parents be mean in Station, or low in Underſtanding; ſtill the Relation continues, and the Duty that belongs to it. Nay, ſuppoſe they be faulty in ſome Part of their Conduct or Character, yet Children ſhould be very backward to ſee this; and it can very ſeldom be allowable for them to ſhew that they ſee it. From the World they ſhould always conceal it, as far as they can; for it is ſhocking beyond Meaſure in *them* to publiſh it. And if ever any Thing of this Nature muſt be mentioned to the Parents themſelves, which nothing but great Neceſſity can warrant or excuſe; it ſhould be with all poſſible Gentleneſs and Modeſty, and the moſt real Concern at being obliged to ſo unnatural an Office.

3. Love

3. Love and Reſpect to Parents will always produce Obedience to them: a third Duty of the higheſt Importance. Children, for a conſiderable Time, are utterly unqualified to govern themſelves; and ſo long as this continues to be the Caſe, muſt be abſolutely and implicitly governed by thoſe, who alone can claim a Title to it. As they grow up to the Uſe of Underſtanding indeed, Reaſon ſhould be gradually mixed with Authority, in every Thing that is required of them. But at the ſame Time, Children ſhould obſerve, what they may eaſily find to be true in daily Inſtances, that they are apt to think they know how to direct themſelves, much ſooner than they really do; and ſhould therefore ſubmit to be directed by their Friends in more Points, and for a longer Time, than perhaps they would naturally be tempted to wiſh. Suppoſe, in that Part of your Lives which is already paſt, you had had your own Way in every Thing, what would have been the Conſequences? You yourſelves muſt ſee, very bad ones. Why, other Perſons ſee, what you will ſee alſo in Time, that it would

would be full as bad, were you to have your Way now. And what all who are likely to know, agree in, you ſhould believe, and ſubmit to. Your Parents and Governors have at leaſt more Knowledge and Experience, if they have not more Capacity, than you. And the Trouble which they take, and the Concern which they feel about you, plainly ſhew that your Good is the Thing which they have at Heart. The only Reaſon why they do not indulge you in the Particulars that you wiſh, is, that they ſee it would hurt you. And it is a dreadful Venture for you, to think, as yet, of truſting yourſelves. Truſt therefore to thoſe, whom you have all Manner of Reaſon to truſt: and obey them willingly, who by the Laws of God and Man, have a right to rule you; and, generally ſpeaking, a Power to make you obey at laſt, be you ever ſo unwilling.

Not that Children are bound to Obedience in all Things, without Exception. Should a Parent command them to lie, to ſteal, to commit any Wickedneſs; God commands the contrary; and He is to be

obeyed, not Man. Or ſhould a Parent command any Thing of Conſequence, directly oppoſite to the Laws of the Land, and the Injunctions of public Authority: here the Magiſtrate, being the ſuperior Power, in all Things that confeſſedly belong to his Juriſdiction, is to be obeyed, rather than the Parent, who ought himſelf to be ſubject to the Magiſtrate[e]. Or if, in other Points, a Parent ſhould require what was both very evidently, and very greatly, unſuitable to a Child's Condition and Station; or had a clear Tendency to make him miſerable; or would be certainly and conſiderably prejudicial to him through the Remainder of his Life: where the one goes ſo far beyond his juſt Bounds, the other may allowably excuſe himſelf from complying. Only the Caſe muſt be both ſo plain, and withal of ſuch Moment, as may juſtify him, not only in his own Judgment, which may eaſily be prejudiced, but in that of every conſiderate Perſon, whom he hath Opportunity of conſulting, and in the general Opinion of

[e] See Taylor's Elements of Civil Law, p. 387, 388, 389.

Mankind.

Mankind. And even then, the Refuſal muſt be accompanied with the greateſt Decency and Humility; and the ſtricteſt Care to make amends, by all Inſtances of real Duty, for this one ſeeming want of Duty.

In proportion as young Perſons approach to that Age, when the Law allows them to be capable of governing themſelves, they become by Degrees leſs and leſs ſubject to the Government of their Parents; eſpecially in ſmaller Matters; for in the more important Concerns of Life, and above all, in the very important one of Marriage, not only Daughters, (concerning whom, the very Phraſe of *giving them in Marriage*, ſhews, that they are not to give themſelves as they pleaſe) but Sons too, ſhould have all poſſible Regard to the Authority, the Judgment, the Bleſſing, the Comfort of thoſe, to whom they owe every Thing. And even after they are ſent out into the World, to ſtand on their own Bottom, ſtill they remain for ever bound not to ſlight, or willingly to grieve them; but in all proper Affairs, to conſult with them, and hearken

hearken to them; as far as it can be at all expected, in Reaſon or Gratitude, that they ſhould.

4. The laſt Thing, which in Scripture the Phraſe of honouring Parents comprehends, is affording them decent Relief and Support, if they are reduced to want it. For thus our Saviour explains the Word, in his Reproof of the Phariſees, for *making this Commandment of no Effect by their Tradition. God commanded, Honour thy Father and thy Mother: but ye ſay, whoſoever ſhall ſay to his Father or Mother, it is a Gift, by whatſoever thou mighteſt be profited by me:* that is, what ſhould have relieved you, I have devoted to religious Uſes: whoſoever ſhall ſay this, and *honoureth not his Father or his Mother; he ſhall be free*[f]. In St. Mark it is, *Ye ſuffer him no more to do ought for his Father or his Mother*[g]. And in other Places of Scripture, beſides this, honouring a Perſon ſignifies contributing to his Maintenance: as 1 *Tim.* v. 17, 18. *Let the Elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double Honour: eſpecially they who labour in the*

[f] Matth. xv. 4, 5, 6. [g] Mark vii. 12.

Word

Word and Doctrine; for the Scripture ſaith, the Labourer is worthy of his Reward.

How worthy Parents are of this, as well as the other Sorts of Honour, when they need it, ſufficiently appears from all that hath been ſaid. If they deſerve to be loved and reſpected; ſurely they are not to be left expoſed to Diſtreſs and Want, by thoſe whom they have brought into Life; and for whom they have done ſo much: but Children, even if they are poor, ſhould both be diligent in working, and provident in ſaving, to keep their helpleſs Parents from Extremities: and if they are in competently good Circumſtances, ſhould allow them a liberal Share of the Plenty, which they enjoy themſelves. Accordingly St. Paul directs, that both *Children, and Nephews*, that is Grand-children, for ſo the Word *Nephew* always means in Scripture, ſhould *learn firſt to ſhew Piety at Home, and to requite their Parents: for that is good and acceptable before God*[b]. Indeed Nature, as well as Chriſtianity, enjoins it ſo ſtrongly, that the whole World cries out Shame,

[b] 1 Tim. v. 4.

where

where it is neglected. And the ſame Reaſon, which requires Parents to be aſſiſted in their Neceſſities, requires Children alſo to attend upon them, and miniſter to them, with vigilant Aſſiduity and tender Affection, in their Infirmities; and to conſult on every Occaſion, their Deſires, their Peace, their Eaſe. And they ſhould conſider both what they contribute to their Support, and every other Inſtance of Regard, which they ſhew them, not as an Alms, given to an Inferior: but as a Tribute of Duty paid to a Superior. For which Reaſon perhaps it may be, that relieving them is mentioned in Scripture under the Notion of honouring them.

One Thing more to be obſerved, is, that all theſe Duties of Children belong equally to both Parents; the Mother being as expreſsly named, as the Father, in the Commandment; and having the ſame Right in point of Reaſon. Only, if contrary Orders are given by the two Parents to the Child; he is bound to obey that Parent rather, whom the other is bound to obey alſo: but ſtill preſerving to each all due

Reverence: from which nothing, not even the Command of either, can diſcharge him [1].

And now I proceed to the Duties of Parents to their Children: on which there is much leſs Need to enlarge, than on the other. For not only Parents have more Underſtanding to know their Duty, and ſtronger Affections to prompt them to do it: but indeed, a great Part of it hath been already intimated, in ſetting forth that of Children to them. It is the Duty of Parents, to take all that kind Care, which is the main Foundation of Love; to keep up ſuch Authority, as may ſecure Reſpect; to give ſuch reaſonable Commands, as may engage a willing Obedience: and thus to make their Children ſo good, and themſelves ſo eſteemed by them, that they may depend, in caſe of Need, on Aſſiſtance and Succour from them.

More particularly, they are bound to think them, from the firſt, worthy of their own Inſpection and Pains; and not abandon

[1] Pietas Parentibus, etſi inæqualis eſt eorum poteſtas, æqua debebitur. D. 27. 10. 4.

them to the Negligence, or bad Management of others: ſo to be tender of them and indulge them, as not to encourage their Faults; ſo to reprove and correct them, as not to break their Spirits, or provoke their Hatred: to inſtill into them the Knowledge, and require of them the Practice, of their Duty to God and Man; and recommend to them every Precept, both of Religion and Morality, by what is the ſtrongeſt Recommendation, a good and amiable Example: to breed them up as ſuitably to their Condition, as may be; but to be ſure not above it; watching over them with all the Care, that conduces to Health; but allowing them in none of the Softneſs, that produces Luxury or Indolence; or of the needleſs Diſtinctions, that pamper Pride: to begin preparing them early, according to their future Station in Life, for being uſeful in it, to others and themſelves: to provide conſcientiouſly for their ſpiritual and eternal, as well as temporal Good, in diſpoſing of them; and beſtow on them willingly, as ſoon as it is fit, whatever may be requiſite to ſettle them

properly in the World: to lay up for them, not by Injuſtice, Penuriouſneſs, or immoderate Sollicitude, all that they can; but by honeſt and prudent Diligence and Attention, as much as is ſufficient; and to diſtribute this amongſt them, not as Fondneſs, or Reſentment, or Caprice, or Vanity, may dictate; but in a reaſonable and equitable Manner; ſuch as will be likelieſt to make thoſe who receive it, love one another, and eſteem the Memory of the Giver.

Theſe are, in brief, the mutual Duties of Parents and Children: and you will eaſily perceive that they are the Duties, in Proportion, of all who by any occaſional, or accidental Means, come to ſtand in the Stead of Parents or of Children. The main Thing which wants to be obſerved, is, that from the Neglect of theſe Duties on one Side, or on both, proceeds a very great Part of the Wickedneſs and Miſery, that is in the World. May God incline the Hearts of all that are concerned either Way in this moſt important Relation, ſo to practiſe the ſeveral Obligations of it, as may

procure to them, in this World, reciprocal Satisfaction and Joy, and eternal Felicity in that which is to come, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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LECTURE XXIII.

The Fifth Commandment.

PART II.

IN my laſt Diſcourſe I began to explain the fifth Commandment: and having already gone through the Duties of Children and Parents, properly ſo called, I come now to the other Sorts of Inferiors and Superiors: all which have ſometimes the ſame Names given them, and are comprehended under the Reaſon and Equity of this Precept.

And here, the firſt Relation to be mentioned, is, that between private Subjects and thoſe in Authority over them: a Relation ſo very like that of Children and Fathers, that the Duties on both Sides are much the ſame in each.

But more particularly, the Duty of Subjects, is, to obey the Laws of whatever Government Providence hath placed us under, in every thing which is not contrary to the Laws of God; and to contribute willingly to its Support, every thing that is legally required, or may be reasonably expected of us: to be faithful and true to the Interests of that Society, of which we are Members; and to the Persons of those, who govern it; paying, both to the supreme Power, and all subordinate Magistrates, every Part of that Submission and Respect, both in Speech and Behaviour, which is their Due; and making all those Allowances in their Favour, which the Difficulty of their Office, and the Frailty of our common Nature, demand: to love and wish well to all our Fellow-Subjects, without Exception; think of them charitably, and treat them kindly; to be peaceable and quiet, each minding diligently the Duties of his own Station; not factious and turbulent, intruding into the Concerns of others: to be modest and humble, *not exercising ourselves in Matters too high for us;*

us[a]; but leaving ſuch Things to the Care of our Superiors, and the Providence of God: to be thankful for the Bleſſings and Advantages of Government, in Proportion as we enjoy them; and reaſonable and patient under the Burdens and Inconveniences of it, which at any Time we may ſuffer.

The Duty of Princes and Magiſtrates, it would be of little Uſe to enlarge on at preſent. In general it is, to confine the Exerciſe of their Power within the Limits of thoſe Laws, to which they are bound; and direct it to the Attainment of thoſe Ends, for which they were appointed: to execute their proper Function with Care and Integrity, as *Men fearing God, Men of Truth, hating Covetouſneſs*[b]; to do all Perſons impartial Juſtice, and conſult, in all Caſes, the public Benefit; encouraging Religion and Virtue with Zeal, eſpecially by a good Example; puniſhing Crimes with Steadineſs, yet with Moderation; and *ſtudying to preſerve the People committed to their Charge, in Wealth, Peace, and Godlineſs*[c].

[a] Pſalm cxxxi. 1. [b] Exod. xviii. 21. [c] Communion Office.

Another Relation, to be brought under this Commandment, is, that between ſpiritual Fathers, the Teachers of Religion, and ſuch as are to be taught.

The Duty of us who have undertaken the important Work of ſpiritual Guides and Teachers, is, to deliver the Doctrines and Precepts of our holy Religion, in the plaineſt and ſtrongeſt Terms that we can; inſiſting on ſuch Things chiefly, as will be moſt conducive to the real and inward Benefit of our Hearers; and recommending them, in the moſt prudent and perſuaſive Manner; *ſeeking to pleaſe all Men for their good, to Edification*[d]; but fearing no Man in the Diſcharge of our Conſciences; and neither ſaying nor omitting any Thing, for the Sake of Applauſe from the many, or the few; or of promoting either our own Wealth and Power, or that of our Order: to inſtruct, exhort, and comfort, all that are placed under our Care, with Sincerity, Diſcretion, and Tenderneſs, privately as well as publickly, ſo far as they give us Opportunity, or we diſcern hope of doing Ser-

[d] Rom. xv. 2. 1 Cor. x. 33.

vice;

vice; *watching for their Souls, as they that muſt give Account*[e]; to rule in the Church of God with Vigilance, Humility, and Meekneſs, *ſhewing ourſelves, in all Things, Patterns of good Works*[f].

The Duty of you, the Chriſtian Laity, whom we are to teach, is, to attend conſtantly and ſeriouſly on religious Worſhip and Inſtruction, as a ſacred Ordinance appointed by Heaven for your ſpiritual Improvement; to conſider impartially and carefully what you hear, and believe and practiſe what you are convinced you ought; to obſerve with due Regard the Rules eſtabliſhed for decent Order and Edification in the Church; and pay ſuch Reſpect, in Word and Deed, to thoſe who miniſter to you in holy Things, as the Intereſt and Honour of Religion require; accepting and encouraging our well-meant Services, and bearing charitably with our many Imperfections and Failings.

A third Relation is that between Maſters or Miſtreſſes of Schools and their Scholars. The Duty of the former is, diligently to

[e] Heb. xiii. 17. [f] Tit. ii. 7.

inſtruct

inſtruct the Children committed to them, in all the Things which they are put to learn, ſuiting their Manner of Teaching, as well as they can, to the Temper and Capacity of each; and to take effectual Care that they apply themſelves to what is taught them, and do their beſt; to watch over their Behaviour, eſpecially in the great Points of Honeſty and Truth, Modeſty and Good-Humour; ſhew Countenance to ſuch as are well-behaved and promiſing; correct the Faulty, with needful, yet not with exceſſive Severity; and get the Incorrigible removed out of the Way, before they corrupt others. And the Duty of the Scholars is, to reverence and obey their Maſter or Miſtreſs, as if they were their Parents; to live friendly and lovingly with one another, as Brethren or Siſters; to be heartily thankful to all, that give or procure them ſo valuable a Bleſſing as uſeful Knowledge; and induſtrious to improve in it; conſidering, how greatly their Happineſs, here and hereafter, depends upon it.

I come

I come now to a fourth Relation, of great Extent and Importance, that between Heads of Families and their Servants.

When the New Teſtament was written, the Generality of Servants were, as in many Places they are ſtill, mere Slaves; and the Perſons to whom they belonged, had a Right to their Labour, and that of their Poſterity, for ever, without giving them any other Wages than their Maintenance; and with a Power to inflict on them what Puniſhments they pleaſed; for the moſt Part, even Death itſelf, if they would. God be thanked, Service amongſt us, is a much happier Thing; the Conditions of it being uſually no other, than the Servants themſelves voluntarily enter into, for their own Benefit. But then, for that Reaſon, they ought to perform whatever is due from them, both more conſcientiouſly, and more chearfully.

Now from Servants is due, in the firſt Place, Obedience. Indeed if they are commanded what is plainly unlawful, they *ought to obey God rather than Men*[t]; but ſtill muſt excuſe themſelves decently, though

[t] Acts v. 29.

reſo-

reſolutely. And even lawful Things, which they have not bargained to do, they are not obliged to do; nor any thing indeed, which is clearly and greatly unſuitable to their Place and Station, and improper to be required of them. But whatever they engaged, or knew they were expected, to do; or what, though they did not know of it beforehand, is uſual and reaſonable, or even not very unreaſonable, they muſt ſubmit to. For if they may, on every ſmall Pretence, refuſe to do *this*, and queſtion whether *that* belongs to their Place, it is moſt evident, that all Authority and Order in Families muſt be at an End: and they themſelves will have much more Trouble in diſputing about their Buſineſs, than they would have in performing it.

Servants therefore ſhould obey; and they ſhould do it reſpectfully and readily; not murmuring, behaving gloomily and ſullenly, as if their Work were not due for their Wages; but, as the Apoſtle exhorts, *with Good-will doing Service*[h]; *not anſwering again*[i], and contradicting, as if thoſe, whom they ſerve, were their Equals; but paying

[h] Eph. vi. 7. [i] Tit. ii. 9.

all

all fit Honour to their Maſter or Miſtreſs, and to every one in the Family.

They are alſo to obey with Diligence: To ſpend as much Time in Work, and follow it as cloſely all that Time, as can be fairly expected from them; *not with Eye-Service, as Men-Pleaſers*, (theſe are the Words of Scripture, twice repeated there) *but in Singleneſs of Heart, fearing God*[k]. Whatever Induſtry therefore a reaſonable Maſter would require, when his Eye is upon them; the ſame, in the main, honeſt Servants will uſe, when his Eye is not upon them: For his Preſence or Abſence can make no Difference in their Duty. He hath agreed with them for their Time and Pains; and he muſt not be defrauded of them.

With Diligence muſt always be joined Care, that no Buſineſs be neglected, or delayed beyond its proper Seaſon; nothing miſmanaged for want of thinking about it; nothing heedleſly, much leſs deſignedly, waſted and ſquandered; but all reaſonable Frugality and good Contrivance ſhewn; and

[k] Eph. vi. 6. Col. iii. 22.

all

all fair Advantages taken, yet no other, for the Benefit of thoſe who employ them. Every Servant would think this but common Juſtice in his own Caſe; and therefore ſhould do it as common Juſtice in his Maſter's Caſe. Some perhaps may imagine, that their Maſter's Eſtate or Income is well able to afford them to be careleſs or extravagant. But the Truth is, few or no Incomes can afford this. For if it be practiſed in one Thing, why not in another? And what muſt follow, if it be practiſed in all? That certainly which we daily ſee, that Perſons of the greateſt Eſtates are diſtreſſed and ruined by it. Or though it would not diſtreſs them at all, yet a Maſter's Wealth is no more a Juſtification of Servants waſting what belongs to him, than of their ſtealing it: And if one be diſhoneſt, the other muſt.

Now Diſhoneſty every body owns to be a Crime: but every body doth not conſider ſufficiently how many Sorts of it there are. Obſerve then, that, beſides the Inſtances already mentioned, and the groſs ones that are puniſhable by Law, it is diſhoneſt in a Servant, either to take to himſelf, or give to another, or conſent to the taking or giving,

ing, whatever he knows he is not allowed, and durſt not do with his Maſter's Knowledge. There are, to be ſure, various Degrees of this Fault; ſome not near ſo bad as others: but it is the ſame Kind of Fault in all of them: beſides that the ſmaller Degrees lead to the greater. And all Diſhoneſty, bad as it is in other Perſons, is yet worſe in thoſe who are intruſted, as Servants are; and Things put in their Power upon that Truſt; which if they break, they are unfaithful, as well as unjuſt.

Another Sort of Diſhoneſty is ſpeaking Falſehoods: Againſt which I have already, in the Courſe of theſe Lectures, given ſome Cautions, and ſhall give more: therefore at preſent I ſhall only ſay, that, whether Servants are guilty of it amongſt themſelves, or to their Maſters or Miſtreſſes, whether againſt or in Favour of one another, or even in their own Favour, there are few Things, by which they may both do and ſuffer more Harm than a lying Tongue.

Truth therefore is a neceſſary Quality in Servants. And a further one is proper Secrecy. For there is great Unfairneſs in betray-

betraying the Secrets, either of their Maſter's Buſineſs, or his Family; or turning to his Diſadvantage any thing that comes to their Knowledge by being employed under him; unleſs it be where Conſcience obliges them to a Diſcovery; which is a Caſe that ſeldom happens. And, excepting that Caſe, what they have promiſed to conceal, it is palpable Wickedneſs to diſcloſe: And where they have not promiſed, yet they are taken into their Maſter's Houſe to be Aſſiſtants and Friends, not Spies and Tale-Bearers; to do Service, not Harm, to him, and to every one that is under his Roof.

Two other Duties, of all Perſons indeed, but in ſome Meaſure peculiarly of Servants, are: Sobriety, without which they can neither be careful nor diligent, nor will be likely to continue juſt; and Chaſtity, the Want of which will produce all Manner of Diſorders and Miſchiefs in the Family to which they belong, and utter Ruin to themſelves.

The laſt requiſite, which I ſhall mention, is Peaceableneſs and good Temper; agree-

agreeing with and helping one another, and making the Work, which they have to do, eaſy, and the Lives, which they are to lead together, comfortable. For it is very unfit, that either their Maſters or any other Part of the Family ſhould ſuffer through their Ill-humour: and indeed they ſuffer enough by it themſelves, to make reſtraining it well worth their while.

Theſe are the Duties of Servants: and as the faithful Performance of them is the ſureſt Way of ſerving themſelves, and being happy in this World; ſo, if it proceed from a true Principle of Conſcience, God will accept it, as Service done to Himſelf, and make them eternally happy for it in the next: whereas wilfully tranſgreſſing, or negligently ſlighting, the Things which they ought to do, whatever Pleaſure, or whatever Advantage it may promiſe or produce to them for a while, will ſeldom fail of bringing them at laſt to Shame and Ruin even here, and will certainly bring them, unleſs they repent and amend, to Miſery hereafter.

But think not, I intreat you, that we will lay Burthens on thoſe below us, and

take none upon ourſelves. There are Duties alſo, and very neceſſary ones, which Maſters and Miſtreſſes owe to their Servants.

To behave towards them with Meekneſs and Gentleneſs, not imperiouſly and with Contempt; and to reſtrain them, as far as may be, from giving bad Uſage one to another; never to accuſe, threaten, or ſuſpect them, without or beyond Reaſon; to hear patiently their Defences and Complaints; and bear, with due Moderation, their Miſtakes and Faults: neither to make them, when in Health, work or fare harder than is fitting; nor ſuffer them, when in Sickneſs, to want any Thing requiſite for their Comfort and Relief: if they be hired Servants, to pay their Wages fully and punctually at the Time agreed: if they are put to learn any Buſineſs or Profeſſion, to inſtruct them in it carefully and thoroughly: not only to give them Time for the Exerciſes of Religion; but Aſſiſtance to underſtand, and Encouragement to practiſe, every Part of their Duty: to keep them, as much as poſſible, both from Sin and Temptation, and particularly from corrupting each other:

to ſhew Diſpleaſure, when they do amiſs, as far, and no farther than the Caſe requires; and to countenance and reward them, when they ſerve well, in Proportion to the Merit and Length of ſuch Service. For all theſe Things are natural Dictates of Reaſon and Humanity; and clearly implied in that comprehenſive Rule of Scripture: *Maſters, give unto your Servants that which is juſt and equal; knowing that ye alſo have a Maſter in Heaven*[1].

There are ſtill two Sorts more, of Inferiors and Superiors, that may properly be mentioned under this Commandment: young Perſons and Elder; thoſe of low and high Degree.

The Duty of the Younger is, to moderate their own Raſhneſs and Love of Pleaſure; to reverence the Perſons and Advice of the Aged; and neither uſe them ill, nor deſpiſe them, on Account of the Infirmities that may accompany advanced Years; conſidering in what Manner they will expect hereafter that others ſhould treat them. And the Duty of elder Perſons is, to make

[1] Col. iv. 1.

all fit Allowances, but no hurtful ones, to the natural Diſpoſitions of young People: to inſtruct them with Patience, and reprove them with Mildneſs; not to require either too much or too long Submiſſion from them; but be willing that they, in their Turn, ſhould come forward into the World; gradually withdrawing themſelves from the heavier Cares, and the lighter Pleaſures, of this Life; and waiting with pious Reſignation to be called into another.

The Duty of the lower Part of the World to thoſe above them, in Rank, Fortune, or Office, is, not to envy them; or murmur at the Superiority, which a wiſe, though myſterious, Providence hath given them; but *in whatever State they are, therewith to be content*[m]; and pay willingly to others all the Reſpect, which Decency or Cuſtom have made their Due. At the ſame Time, the Duty of thoſe in higher Life is, to relieve the Poor, protect the Injured, countenance the Good, diſcourage the Bad, as they have Opportunity; not to ſcorn, much leſs to oppreſs, the meaneſt of their Brethen; but

[m] Phil. iv. 11.

to

to remember, that *we ſhall all ſtand before the Judgment-Seat of Chriſt*[n]; where *he that doth wrong, ſhall receive for the Wrong which he hath done; and there is no Reſpect of Perſons*[o].

And now, were but all theſe Duties conſcientiouſly obſerved by all the World, how happy a Place would it be! And whoever will faithfully do their own Part of them, they ſhall be happy, whether others will do theirs or not; and this Commandment aſſures them of it; *that thy Days may be long in the Land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.* In all Probability, if we obey his Laws, and that now before us in particular, both longer and more proſperous will our Days prove in this Land of our Pilgrimage, in which God hath placed us to ſojourn; but, without all Queſtion, eternal and infinite ſhall our Felicity be, in that Land of Promiſe, the heavenly Canaan, which He hath appointed for our Inheritance; and which that we may all inherit accordingly, He of his Mercy grant, *&c.*

[n] Rom. xiv. 10. [o] Col. iii. 25.

LECTURE XXIV.

The Sixth Commandment.

HAVING ſet before you, under the Fifth Commandment, the particular Duties, which Inferiors and Superiors owe each to the other; I proceed now to thoſe remaining Precepts, which expreſs the general Duties of all Men to all Men.

Amongſt theſe, as Life is the Foundation of every Thing valuable to us, the Preſervation of it is juſtly intitled to the firſt Place. And accordingly the Sixth Commandment is, *Thou ſhalt do no Murder.* Murder is taking away a Perſon's Life, with Deſign, and without Authority. Unleſs both concur, it doth not deſerve that Name.

1. It is not Murder, unleſs it be with Deſign. He, who is duly careful to avoid doing Harm, and unhappily, notwithſtanding that, kills another, though he hath

Cauſe to be extremely ſorry for it, yet is entirely void of Guilt on Account of it. For his Will having no Share in the Action, it is not, in a moral Senſe, his. But if he doth the Miſchief through Heedleſſneſs, or Levity of Mind, or inconſiderate Vehemence, here is a Fault. If the Likelihood of Miſchief could be foreſeen, the Fault is greater; and the higheſt Degree of ſuch Negligence, or impetuous Raſhneſs, comes near to bad Intention.

2. It is not Murder, unleſs it be without Authority. Now a Perſon hath Authority, from the Law both of God and Man, to defend his own Life, if he cannot do it otherwiſe, by the Death of whoever attacks it unjuſtly: whoſe Deſtruction, in that Caſe, is of his own ſeeking, and *his Blood on his own Head*[a]. But nothing, ſhort of the moſt imminent Danger, ought ever to carry us to ſuch an Extremity: and a good Perſon will ſpare ever ſo bad a one, as far as he can with any Proſpect of Safety. Again, proper Magiſtrates have Authority to ſentence Offenders to Death, on ſufficient Proof

[a] 2 Sam. i. 16. 1 Kings ii. 37. Ezek. xxxiii. 4.

of

of ſuch Crimes as the Welfare of the Community requires to be thus puniſhed; and to employ others in the Execution of that Sentence. And private Perſons have Authority, and in proper Circumſtances are obliged, to ſeize and proſecute ſuch Offenders: for all this is only another Sort of Self-Defence; defending the Public from what elſe would be pernicious to it. And the Scripture hath ſaid, that the Sovereign Power *beareth not the Sword in vain*[b]. But in whatever Caſes gentler Puniſhments would ſufficiently anſwer the Ends of Government, ſurely capital ones are forbidden by this Commandment. Self-Defence, in the laſt Place, authorizes whole Nations to make War upon other Nations, when it is the only Way to obtain Redreſs of Injuries, which cannot be ſupported; or Security againſt impending Ruin. To determine, whether the State is indeed in theſe unhappy Circumſtances, belongs to the ſupreme Juriſdiction: and the Queſtion ought to be conſidered very conſcientiouſly. For Wars, begun or continued without

[b] Rom. xiii. 4.

Neceſſity,

Neceſſity, are unchriſtian and inhuman: as many Murders are committed, as Lives are loſt in them; beſides the innumerable Sins and Miſeries of other Sorts, with which they are always attended. But Subjects, in their private Capacity, are incompetent Judges of what is requiſite for the public Weal: nor can the Guardians of it permit them to act upon their Judgment, were they to make one. Therefore they may lawfully ſerve in Wars, which their Superiors have unlawfully undertaken, excepting perhaps ſuch offenſive Wars as are notoriouſly unjuſt. In others, it is no more the Buſineſs of the Soldiery to conſider the Grounds of their Sovereign's taking up Arms, than it is the Buſineſs of the Executioner to examine whether the Magiſtrate hath paſſed a right Sentence.

You ſee then, in what Caſes killing is not Murder: in all, but theſe, it is. And you cannot fail of ſeeing the Guilt of this Crime to be ſingularly great and heinous. It brings deſignedly upon one of our Brethren, without Cauſe, what human Nature abhors and dreads moſt. It cuts him off from all the

Enjoy-

Enjoyments of this Life at once, and ſends him into another, for which poſſibly he was not yet prepared. It defaces the Image, and defeats the Deſign, of God. It overturns the great Purpoſe of Government and Laws, mutual Safety. It robs the Society of a Member, and conſequently of Part of its Strength. It robs the Relations, Friends, and Dependents, of the Perſon deſtroyed, of every Benefit and Pleaſure, which elſe they might have had from him. And the Injury done, in all theſe Reſpects, hath the terrible Aggravation, that it cannot be recalled. Moſt wiſely therefore hath our Creator ſurrounded Murder with a peculiar Horror; that Nature, as well as Reaſon, may deter from it every one, who is not utterly abandoned to the worſt of Wickedneſs: and moſt juſtly hath he appointed the Sons of *Noah*, that is, all Mankind, to puniſh Death with Death. *Whoſo ſheddeth Man's Blood, by Man ſhall his Blood be ſhed; for in the Image of God made He Man* [c]. And that nothing may protect ſo daring an Offender, he enjoined the *Jews*, in the Chapter which fol-

[c] Gen. ix. 6.

lows

lows the ten Commandments; *If a Man come presumptuously upon his Neighbour to slay him with Guile, thou shalt take him from mine Altar, that he may die*[d]. But supposing, what seldom happens, that the Murderer may escape judicial Vengeance; yet what piercing Reflections, what continual Terrors and Alarms must he carry about with him! And could he be hardened against these, it would only subject him the more inevitably to that future Condemnation, from which nothing but the deepest Repentance can possibly exempt him. For *no Murderer hath eternal Life*[e]; but they *shall have their Part in the Lake that burneth with Fire and Brimstone, which is the second Death*[f].

But shocking, and deserving of Punishment here and hereafter, as this Crime always is; yet there are Circumstances, which may augment it greatly. If the Person, whom any one deprives of Life, be placed in lawful Authority over him; or united in Relation or Friendship to him; or have done him Kindnesses; or only never have

[d] Exod. xxi. 14. [e] 1 John iii. 15. [f] Rev. xxi. 8.

done him Harm; or be, in a peculiar Degree, good, uſeful, or pitiable; each of theſe Things conſiderably increaſes the Sin, though ſome indeed more than others. Again, if the horrid Fact be formally contrived, and perhaps the Deſign carried on through a Length of Time; this argues a much more ſteady and inflexible Depravity of Heart, than the Commiſſion of it in a ſudden Rage. But ſtill, even the laſt, though it hath, in the Law of this Country, a different Name, of Man-Slaughter, given it, and a different Puniſhment preſcribed for the firſt Offence; yet in the Sight of God is as truly Murder as the former, though freer from Aggravations. The Miſchief done is done purpoſely; and neither Paſſion, nor Provocation, gives Authority for doing it; or even any great Excuſe. For as God hath required us, he hath certainly enabled us, to reſtrain the haſtieſt Sallies of our Anger, eſpecially from ſuch Enormities as this.

Nor doth it materially alter the Nature, or leſſen at all the Degree, of the Sin, if, whilſt we attack another, we give him an

Oppor-

Opportunity to defend himſelf, and attack us: as in duelling. Still taking away his Life is Murder: expoſing our own is ſo likewiſe; as I ſhall quickly ſhew you. And an Appointment of two Perſons to meet for this Purpoſe, under Pretence of being bound to it by their Honour, is an Agreement in Form to commit, for the Sake of an abſurd Notion, or rather an unmeaning Word, the moſt capital Offence againſt each other, and their Maker; of which, if their Intention ſucceed, they cannot have Time to repent.

As to the Manner, in which Murder is committed; whether a Perſon do it directly himſelf, or employ another; whether he do it by Force, or Fraud, or Colour of Juſtice; accuſing falſely, or taking any unfair Advantage: theſe Things make little further Difference in the Guilt, than that the moſt artful and ſtudied Way is generally the worſt.

And though a Deſign of Murder ſhould not take Effect; yet whoever hath done all that he could towards it, is plainly as much a Sinner, as if it had. Nay, doing any Thing

Thing towards it, or ſo much as once intending it, or aſſiſting or encouraging any other who intends it, is the ſame Sort of Wickedneſs. And if a Perſon doth not directly deſign the Death of another; yet if he deſignedly doth what he knows or ſuſpects may probably occaſion it; he is, in Proportion to his Knowledge, or Suſpicion, guilty. Nay, if he is only negligent in Matters, which may affect human Life; or meddles with them, when he hath Cauſe to think he underſtands them not; he is far from innocent. And there are ſeveral Profeſſions and Employments, in which theſe Truths ought to be conſidered with a peculiar Degree of Seriouſneſs.

Further yet: If it be criminal to contribute in any Manner towards taking away a Perſon's Life immediately; it muſt be criminal alſo to contribute any Thing towards ſhortening it, which is taking it away after a Time: whether by bringing any bodily Diſeaſe upon him, or cauſing him any Grief or Anxiety of Mind, or by what indeed will produce both, diſtreſſing him in his Circumſtances: concerning which

which the Son of *Sirach* ſaith: *He that taketh away his Neighbour's Living, ſlayeth him; and he that defraudeth the Labourer of his Hire, is a Blood-Shedder*[g].

Indeed, if we cauſe or procure any Sort of Hurt to another, though it hath no Tendency to deprive him of Life, yet if it makes any Part of his Life, more or leſs, uneaſy or uncomfortable, we deprive him ſo far of what makes it valuable to him: which is equivalent to taking ſo much of it away from him, or poſſibly worſe.

Nay, if we do a Perſon no Harm; yet if we wiſh him Harm, St. *John* hath determined the Caſe: *Whoſoever hateth his Brother, is a Murderer*[h]. For indeed, Hatred not only leads to Murder; and too often, when indulged, produces it unexpectedly; but it is always, though perhaps for the moſt Part in a lower Degree, the very Spirit of Murder in the Heart; and it is by our Hearts that God will judge us. Nay, ſhould our Diſlike of another not riſe to fixed Hatred and Malice; yet if it riſe to unjuſt Anger, we know our Saviour's

[g] Ecclus. xxxiv. 22. [h] 1 John iii. 15.

Decla-

Declaration. *It was ſaid by them of old Time, Thou ſhalt not kill: and whoſoever ſhall kill, ſhall be in Danger of the Judgment. But I ſay unto you, whoſoever is angry with his Brother without a Cauſe, ſhall be in Danger of the Judgment*[i]. That is, whoſoever is angry, either with Perſons that he ought not, or on Occaſions that he ought not, or more vehemently, or ſooner, or longer than he ought, is guilty in ſome Meaſure of that Uncharitableneſs of which Murder is the higheſt Act; and liable to the Puniſhment of it in the ſame Proportion.

Nor even yet have I carried the Explanation of this Commandment to the Extent of our Duty. Whoever doth not, as far as can be reaſonably expected from him, endeavour to guard his Neighbour from Harm, to make Peace, to relieve Diſtreſs and Want, fails of what Love to human Kind certainly requires. Now *Love is the fulfilling of the Law*[k]: and *he hath loveth not his Brother, abideth in Death*[l].

We are alſo carefully to obſerve, that however heinous it is, to ſin againſt the

[i] Matth. v. 21, 22. [k] Rom. xiii. 10. [l] 1 John iii. 14.

temporal Life of any one: injuring him in reſpect of his eternal Intereſts, is yet unſpeakably worſe. If it be unlawful to kill or hurt the Body, or overlook Mens worldly Neceſſities; much more is it to *deſtroy* the Soul of *our Brother, for whom Chriſt died*[m]; or any Way endanger it; or even ſuffer it to continue in Danger, if we have in our Power the proper and likely Means of delivering it. And on the other Hand, all that Mercy and Humanity, which, in the civil Concerns of our Neighbours, is ſo excellent a Duty, muſt proportionably be ſtill more excellent in their religious ones, and of higher Value in the Sight of God.

Hitherto I have conſidered the Prohibition, *Thou ſhalt do no Murder*, as reſpecting others: but it forbids alſo Self-Murder. As we are not to commit Violence againſt the Image of God in the Perſon of any of our Brethren; ſo neither in our own. As we are not to rob the Society to which we belong, or any Part of it, of the Service, which any other of its Members might do it; we are not to rob either of what we

[m] Rom. xiv. 15.

might

might do. As we are not to ſend any one elſe out of the World prematurely; we are not to ſend ourſelves; but *wait* with Patience *all the Days of our appointed Time, till our Change come*[n]. If the Sins, which Perſons have committed, prompt them to Deſpair; they of all others, inſtead of ruſhing into the Preſence of God by adding this dreadful one to them, ſhould earneſtly deſire *Space to repent*[o]; which, by his Grace, the worſt of Sinners may do, and be forgiven. If their Misfortunes or Sufferings make them weary of Life; he hath ſent them theſe with Deſign, that they ſhould not by unlawful Means evade them, but go through them well: whether they be inflicted for the Puniſhment of their Faults, or the Trial of their Virtues. In either Caſe, we are to ſubmit quietly to the Diſcipline of our heavenly Father: which he will not ſuffer to be heavier than we can bear, whatever we may imagine; but will ſupport us under it, improve us by it, and in due Time releaſe us from it. But in any Caſe for Perſons to make away with them-

[n] Job. xiv. 14. [o] Rev. ii. 21.

ſelves, is to arraign the Conſtitution of Things which he hath appointed; and to refuſe living where he hath put them to live: a very provoking Inſtance of Undutifulneſs, and made peculiarly fatal by this Circumſtance, that leaving uſually no Room for Repentance, it leaves none for Pardon: always excepting, where it proceeds from a Mind ſo diſordered by a bodily Diſeaſe, as to be incapable of judging or acting reaſonably. For God knows with Certainty when this is the Cauſe, and when not: and will accordingly either make due Allowances, or make none.

And if deſtroying ourſelves be a Sin, doing any thing wilfully or heedleſsly, that tends to our Deſtruction, muſt in Proportion be a Sin. Where indeed Neceſſity requires great Hazards to be run by ſome Perſons for the Good of others: as in War, in extinguiſhing dangerous Fires, in ſeveral Caſes which might be named; or where Employments and Profeſſions which ſomebody or other muſt undertake, or ſuch Diligence in any Employment as Men are by Accidents really called to uſe, impair Health

and ſhorten Life; there, far from being thrown away, it is laudably ſpent in the Service of God and Man. But for any Perſon to bring on himſelf an untimely End, by adventurous Raſhneſs, by ungoverned Paſſion, by immoderate Anxiety, or by an obſtinate or careleſs Neglect of his own Preſervation, is unqueſtionably ſinful. And above all, doing it by Debauchery or immoral Exceſs, is a moſt effectual Way of ruining Soul and Body at once.

Let us therefore be conſcientiouſly watchful againſt every Thing which may provoke, or entice us, to be injurious, either to others or ourſelves. And God grant, that we may ſo regard the Lives of our Fellow-Creatures, and ſo employ our own, that we may ever pleaſe the Giver and Lord of Life: and having faithfully lived to him here, may eternally live with him hereafter, through Jeſus Chriſt our only Saviour. Amen.

LECTURE XXV.

The Seventh Commandment.

IN ſpeaking to this Commandment, it is proper to begin with obſerving, that as in the Sixth, where Murder is forbidden, every Thing which tends to it, or proceeds from the ſame bad Principle with it, is forbidden too: ſo here, in the Seventh, where Adultery is prohibited, the Prohibition muſt be extended to whatever elſe is criminal in the ſame Kind. And therefore in explaining it, I ſhall treat, firſt of the Fidelity which it requires from married Perſons, and then of the Chaſtity and Modeſty which it requires from all Perſons.

Firſt of the Fidelity owing to each other from married Perſons.

Not only the Scripture-Account of the Creation of Mankind is a Proof to as many as believe in Scripture, that the Union of

one Man with one Woman was the original Design and Will of Heaven; but the remarkable Equality of Males and Females born into the World is an Evidence of it to all Men. Yet notwithstanding, it must be owned, the Cohabitation of one Man with several Wives at the same Time was practised very anciently in the darker Ages, even by some of the Patriarchs, who were otherwise good Persons; but, having no explicit revealed Rule concerning this Matter, failed of discerning the above-mentioned Purpose of God. And both this Error and that of Divorce on slight Occasions, were tolerated by the Law of *Moses*. But that was only as the Laws of other Countries often connive at what the Lawgiver is far from approving. Accordingly God expressed, particularly by the Prophet *Malachi*[a], his Dislike of these Things. And our Saviour both tells the Jews, that *Moses* permitted Divorces at Pleasure, merely *because of the Hardness of their Hearts*, and peremptorily declares, that *whosoever shall put away his Wife, except it be for Forni-*

[a] Mal. ii. 14, 15, 16.

cation,

cation, and ſhall marry another, committeth Adultery [b]. Now certainly it cannot be leſs adulterous to marry a Second without putting away the Firſt.

Nor is Polygamy (that is, the having more Wives than one at once) prohibited in holy Writ alone, but condemned by many of the Heathens themſelves, who alledge againſt it very plain and forcible Reaſons. It is inconſiſtent with a due Degree of mutual Affection in the Parties, and due Care in the Education of their Children. It introduces into Families perpetual Subjects of the bittereſt Enmity and Jealouſy; keeps a Multitude of Females in moſt unnatural Bondage, frequently under Guardians fitted for the Office by unnatural Cruelty; and tempts a Multitude of Males, thus left unprovided for, to unnatural Luſts. In civilized and well-regulated Countries therefore, ſingle Marriages have either been eſtabliſhed at firſt, or prevailed afterwards on Experience of their Preferableneſs: and a mutual Promiſe of inviolable Faithfulneſs to the Marriage-Bed hath been underſtood

[b] Matth. xix. 8, 9.

to

to be an eſſential Part of the Contract: which Promiſe is with us moſt ſolemnly expreſſed in the Office of Matrimony, by as clear and comprehenſive Words as can be deviſed. And unleſs Perſons are at Liberty in all Caſes to ſlight the moſt aweful Vows to God, and the moſt deliberate Engagements of each to the other; how can they be at Liberty in this, where public Good and private Happineſs are ſo deeply intereſted?

Breaches of plighted Faith, as they muſt be preceded by a Want of ſufficient conjugal Affection in the offending Party, ſo they tend to extinguiſh all the Remains of it: and this Change will be perceived, and will give Uneaſineſs to the Innocent one, though the Cauſe be hid. But if it be known, or merely ſuſpected by the Perſon wronged, (which it ſeldom fails to be in a little Time) it produces, from the Make of the human Mind, in warmer Tempers, a Reſentment ſo ſtrong, in milder, an Affliction ſo heavy, that few Things in the World equal either. *For Love is ſtrong as Death, Jealouſy is cruel as the Grave, the Coals*

Coals thereof are Coals of Fire[c]. And, with whatever Vehemence they burn inwardly or outwardly, it can be no Wonder; when perfidious Unkindneſs is found in that neareſt Relation, where Truth and Love were deliberately pledged, and ſtudiouſly paid on one Side in Expectation of a ſuitable Return; and when the tendereſt Part of the Enjoyment of Life is given up beyond Recall into the Hands of a Traitor, who turns it into the acuteſt Miſery. To what a Height Grief and Anger on one Side, and Neglect ripened into Scorn and Hatred on the other, may carry ſuch Calamities, cannot be foreſeen: but at leaſt they utterly deſtroy that Union of Hearts, that reciprocal Confidence, that Openneſs of Communication, that Sameneſs of Intereſts, of Joys and of Sorrows, which conſtitute the principal Felicity of the married State. And beſides, how very frequently do the Conſequences of theſe Tranſgreſſions affect, and even ruin, the Health or the Fortune, it may be both, of the blameleſs Perſon in common with the other: and

[c] Cant. viii. 6.

perhaps

perhaps derive down Diſeaſes and Poverty to ſucceſſive Generations!

Theſe are Fruits which Unfaithfulneſs in either Party may produce. In one it may produce yet more. A Woman, guilty of this Crime, who, to uſe the Words of Scripture, *forſaketh the Guide of her Youth, and forgetteth the Covenant of her God*[d], brings peculiar Diſgrace on her Huſband, her Children, and Friends; and may bring an illegitimate Offſpring to inherit what is the Right of others; nor is the Infamy and Puniſhment, to which ſhe expoſes herſelf, a leſs dreadful Evil for being a deſerved one. And if Falſehood on the Mens Part hath not all the ſame Aggravations, it hath very great ones in their Stead. They are almoſt conſtantly the Tempters; they often carry on their wicked Deſigns for a long Time together: they too commonly uſe the vileſt Means to accompliſh them. And as they claim the ſtricteſt Fidelity, it is ungenerous, as well as unjuſt, to fail of paying it. All Men muſt feel how bitter it would be to them to be injured in this Reſpect; let them

[d] Prov. ii. 17.

think

think then what it is to be injurious in it: and ſince the Crime is the ſame when committed by them, as when committed againſt them, let them own that it deſerves the ſame Condemnation from the Judge of the World. *The Lord hath been Witneſs*, ſaith the Prophet, *between thee and the Wife of thy Youth, againſt whom thou dealeſt treacherouſly; yet is ſhe thy Companion, and the Wife of thy Covenant. Therefore take Heed to your Spirit, and let none deal treacherouſly with the Wife of his Youth*[e]

It will be ſafeſt, but I hope it is not neceſſary, to add, that an unmarried Man or Woman, offending with the Wife or Huſband of any one, being no leſs guilty of Adultery than the Perſon with whom the Offence is committed, is conſequently an Accomplice in all the Wickedneſs and all the Miſchief abovementioned; and this frequently with aggravating Circumſtances of the greateſt Baſeneſs, and Treachery, and Ingratitude, and Cruelty, that can be imagined. Whatever ſome may plead, ſurely none can think ſuch Behaviour defenſible;

[e] Mal. ii. 14, 15.

and

and moſt ſurely they will not find it ſo: for *Marriage is honourable in all, and the Bed undefiled; but Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge*[f].

The Crime of Adultery being ſo great, it follows, that all improper Familiarities, which, though undeſignedly, may lead to Adultery, and all imprudent Behaviour, which may give Suſpicion of it, is to be avoided as Matter of Conſcience; that all groundleſs Jealouſy is to be checked by thoſe who are inclined to it, and diſcouraged by others, as moſt heinous Injuſtice; and that every Thing ſhould be carefully obſerved by both Parties, which may endear them to each other. No Perſons therefore ſhould ever enter into the Marriage-Bond with ſuch as they cannot eſteem and love: and all Perſons, who have entered into it, ſhould uſe all Means, not only to preſerve Eſteem and Love, but to increaſe it: affectionate Condeſcenſion on the Huſband's Part, chearful Submiſſion on the Wife's; Mildneſs and Tenderneſs, Prudence and Attention to their common Intereſt,

[f] Heb. xiii. 4.

and

and that of their joint Poſterity, on both Parts. It is uſually, in a great Meaſure at leaſt, from the Want of theſe engaging Qualities in one or the other, that Falſehood ariſes. And if that doth not, ſome other Evil will; too likely to produce Effects equally grievous, and therefore to be conſidered as equally forbidden.

But now, from the mutual Fidelity required of married Perſons, I proceed, ſecondly, to the Chaſtity and Modeſty required of all Perſons.

Suppoſing that only ſuch as live ſingle were to be guilty with each other; yet by Means even of this Licentiouſneſs, in Proportion as it prevails, the Regularity and good Order of Society is overturned, the Credit and Peace of Families deſtroyed, the proper Diſpoſal of young People in Marriage prevented, the due Education of Children and Proviſion for them neglected, the keeneſt Animoſities perpetually excited, and the moſt ſhocking Murders frequently committed, of the Parties themſelves, their Rivals, their innocent Babes: in ſhort, every Enormity follows from hence, that lawleſs

Paſſion can introduce. For all Sins indeed, but eſpecially this, leads Perſons on to more and greater: to all Manner of Falſehood to ſecure their Succeſs, all Manner of Diſhoneſty to provide for the Expenſiveneſs of theſe Courſes, all Manner of Barbarity to hide the Shame or lighten the Inconveniencies of them: till thus they become abandoned to every Crime, by indulging this one.

But let us conſider the fatal Effects of it on the two Sexes, ſeparately. Women, that loſe their Innocence, which ſeldom fails of being ſoon diſcovered, loſe their good Name intirely along with it; are marked out and given up at once to almoſt irrecoverable Infamy: and even mere Suſpicion hath in ſome Meaſure the ſame bad Conſequences with certain Proof. It is, doubtleſs, extremely unjuſt to work up mere Imprudencies into groſs Tranſgreſſions: and even the greateſt Tranſgreſſors ought to be treated with all poſſible Compaſſion, when they appear truly penitent. But, unleſs they appear ſo, a wide Diſtinction between them and others ought to be made. And they

who

who contribute, whether deſignedly or thoughleſsly, to place good, bad, and doubtful Characters all on a Level, do moſt prepoſterouſly obſcure and debaſe their own Virtue, if they have any; keep Guilt in Countenance, and defraud right Conduct of the peculiar Eſteem which belongs to it: thus injuring at once the Cauſe of Religion and Morals, and the Intereſts of Society. But beſides the general Diſregard, of which vicious Women will experience not a little, even in Places and Times of the moſt relaxed Ways of thinking, they have a ſorer Evil to expect; of being, ſooner or later, for the moſt part very ſoon, caſt off and abandoned, with Contempt and Scorn, by their Seducers. Or even ſhould they have Reparation made them by Marriage; this doth not take away the Sin at all, and the Diſgrace but very imperfectly: not to ſay, that it ſtill leaves them peculiarly expoſed to the Reproaches and the Jealouſy of their Huſbands ever after.

And if Men, that ſeduce Women, are not looked on by the World with ſo much Abhorrence, as Women that are ſeduced,

at leaſt they deſerve to be looked on with greater. For there cannot eaſily be more exquiſite Wickedneſs, than, merely for the gratifying of a brutal Appetite or idle Fancy, to change all the Proſpect, which a young Perſon hath of being happy and reſpected through Life, into Guilt, and Diſhonour, and Diſtreſs, out of which too probably ſhe will never be diſentangled, under the falſe and treacherous Pretence of tender Regard. If we have any Feeling of Conſcience within us, we muſt feel this to be moſt unworthy Behaviour. And if the Ruler of the World hath any Attention to the moral Character of his rational Creatures, which is the nobleſt Object of his Attention, that can be conceived, He muſt ſhew it on ſuch Occaſions: and therefore may be believed, when He ſaith He will.

But ſuppoſing Men not to corrupt the Innocent, but to ſin with ſuch alone as make a Profeſſion of Sin; yet even this Manner of breaking the Law of God hath moſt dreadful Conſequences. It hinders the Increaſe of a Nation in general. It leaves the few Children, that proceed from theſe Mix-

tures, abandoned to Miſery, Uſeleſſneſs and Wickedneſs. It turns aſide the Minds of Perſons from beneficial and laudable Employments to mean ſenſual Purſuits. It encourages and increaſes the moſt diſſolute and in every Senſe abandoned Set of Wretches in the World, common Proſtitutes, to their own miſerable and early Deſtruction; and that of Multitudes of unwary Youths, who would elſe have eſcaped. It debaſes the Heart, by the Influence of ſuch vile and profligate Company, to vile and profligate Ways of thinking and acting. It ſometimes produces Quarrels, that are immediately fatal: ſometimes Friendſhips, that are equally ſo, to every valuable Purpoſe of Life. It leads Men to Extravagance and Profuſion, grieves all that wiſh them well, diſtreſſes thoſe who are to ſupport them, and drives them to the moſt criminal Methods of ſupporting themſelves. It tempts Men to Exceſſes and Irregularities of every Kind, waſtes their Health and Strength, brings on them painful and opprobrious Diſeaſes, too often communicated to thoſe, whom they afterwards marry; and to their miſerable Poſterity, if

they have any. By all theſe Miſchiefs, which for the moſt Part come upon them in the Beginning of their Days, the Remainder of them is uſually made either *ſhort* or *tedious*, perhaps both [g]. With great Wiſdom therefore doth Solomon exhort: *Remove thy Way from the ſtrange Woman, and come not nigh the Door of her Houſe: leſt thou give thine Honour unto others, and thy Years unto the Cruel: leſt Strangers be filled with thy Wealth, and thou mourn at the laſt, when thy Fleſh and thy Body are conſumed, and ſay, How have I hated Inſtruction, and my Heart deſpiſed Reproof; and I have not obeyed the Voice of my Teachers. For the Ways of Man are before the Eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his Goings. His own Iniquities ſhall take the Wicked, and he ſhall be holden with the Cords of his Sins* [h].

It is very true, the Sins of the Fleſh do not always produce all the bitter Fruits which I have mentioned. But then ſuch Inſtances of them, as at firſt are imagined the ſafeſt, frequently prove extremely hurtful; or however intice Perſons on to worſe,

[g] Wiſd. ii. 1. [h] Prov. v. 8—13, 21, 22.

till

till they come at length to the moſt flagrant and pernicious, Very few, who tranſgreſs the Scripture-Bounds, ever ſtop at thoſe Lengths, which themſelves, when they ſet out, thought the greateſt that were defenſible. Liberties, taken by Men before Marriage, incline them to repeat the ſame Liberties after Marriage; and alſo to entertain the moſt injurious Jealouſies of good Women, grounded on the Knowledge which they have formerly had of bad ones. Their paſt Succeſſes embolden and incite them to new and more flagitious Attempts: and by Appetites thus indulged, and Habits contracted, they are carried on perpetually further and further, till they come to be guilty, and ſometimes merely for the Sake and the Name of being guilty, of what they would once have trembled to hear propoſed.

But ſuppoſing they keep within the Limits of what they at firſt imagined to be allowable: is Imagination (and Reaſon, when biaſſed by Paſſions, is nothing better) the Teſt of Truth? Suppoſing their Behaviour could be harmleſs otherwiſe, is not the Example dangerous? Will or can the World

around them take Notice of all the pretended Peculiarities that diſtinguiſh their Caſe, and preſerve it from being a Sin, while other Crimes, to which at firſt Sight it is very like, are confeſſedly great ones? or will not all, who have bad Inclinations or unſettled Principles, take Shelter under their Practice, and either deſpiſe their Refinements, or eaſily invent ſimilar ones for their own Uſe?

But further yet: if it be argued, that Offences of this Nature may by Circumſtances be rendered excuſable, why not others alſo? why may not Robbery, why may not Murder be defended, by ſaying, that though undoubtedly in general they are very wrong, yet in ſuch or ſuch particular Occurrences, there is on the whole very little Hurt, or none at all, done by them, but perhaps Good? And what would become of the human Race, were ſuch Pleas admitted? The Ends of Government can be attained by no other than by plain, determinate, comprehenſive Laws, to be ſteadily obſerved: and no one's Inclination, or fanciful Theories, are to decide,

cide, when they bind, and when not: but Deviations from them are criminal, if on no other Account, yet becauſe they are Deviations: though differently criminal indeed according to their different Degrees. Thus in the Matter before us, what approaches nearer to Marriage is, ordinarily ſpeaking, ſo far leſs blameable, than what is more diſtant from it: but nothing can be void of Blame, and of great Blame, that breaks the Ordinances of God or Man. For even the latter, if they oblige the Conſcience in any Caſe, muſt oblige it in this, where public and private Welfare is ſo eſſentially concerned. And as to the former, though ſenſual Irregularities may ſuit very well with ſome Sorts of Superſtition, yet their Inconſiſtence with any Thing that deſerves the Name of Religion, is confeſſed in Effect by the Perſons guilty of them. For if ſome few ſuch do hypocritically, in vain Hope of Concealment, keep on the Appearance of it, yet who amongſt them can preſerve the Reality of it? Offences of this Kind, how plauſibly ſoever palliated, yet, being committed againſt known Prohibi-

tions, wear out of the Mind all Reverence to God's Commandments, all Expectation of his future Favour, nay the very Desire of spiritual Happiness hereafter. And tho' many, who indulge in Licentiousness, have notwithstanding very good Qualities; yet, would they review their Hearts and Lives, they would find that they have much the fewer for it; and that those which remain are often made useless, often endangered, often perverted by it.

But the Sins already mentioned, are by no means the only ones to be avoided in Consequence of this Commandment: whatever invites to them, whatever approaches towards them, whatever is contrary to Decency and Honour, whatever taints the Purity of the Mind, inflames the Passions, and wears off the Impressions of virtuous Shame; all Immodesty of Appearance or Behaviour; all Entertainments, Books, Pictures, Conversations, tending to excite or excuse the Indulgence of irregular Desires, are in their Proportion prohibited and criminal. And unless we prudently guard against the smaller Offences of this Kind,

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the more heinous will be too likely to force their Way: as our Lord very ſtrongly warns us. *Ye have heard, it was ſaid by them of old Time, Thou ſhalt not commit Adultery: but I ſay unto you, that whoſoever looketh on a Woman to luſt after her, hath committed Adultery with her already in his Heart*[i]. And though vicious Inclinations were never to go further than the Heart; yet if, inſtead of merely intruding againſt our Will, they are deſignedly encouraged to dwell there, they corrupt the very Fountain of ſpiritual Life; and none but *the Pure in Heart ſhall ſee God*[k].

All Perſons therefore ſhould be very careful to turn their Minds from forbidden Objects, to fix their Attention ſo conſtantly and ſteadily on uſeful and commendable Employments, as to have no Leiſure for Vices, and to govern themſelves by ſuch Rules of Temperance and Prudence, that every ſenſual Appetite may be kept in Subjection to the Dictates of Reaſon and the Laws of Religion; always remembring that Chriſtianity both delivers to us the ſtricteſt

[i] Matth. v. 27, 28. [k] Matth. v. 8.

Precepts

Precepts of Holineſs, and ſets before us the ſtrongeſt Motives to it; our peculiar Relation to a holy God and Saviour; our being *the Temples of the Holy Ghoſt* [l], which *Temple if any Man defile, him will God deſtroy* [m]; our being *Pilgrims and Strangers on Earth* [n], not intended to have our Portion here, but to inherit a ſpiritual Happineſs hereafter: and *every one that hath this Hope, muſt purify himſelf even as God is pure* [o]. I ſhall conclude therefore with St. *Paul*'s Exhortation: *Fornication, and all Uncleanneſs, let it not be once named among you, as becometh Saints; neither Filthineſs, nor fooliſh Talking, nor Jeſting, which are not convenient: for this ye know, that no Whoremonger, nor unclean Perſon, hath any Inheritance in the Kingdom of Chriſt and of God. Let no Man deceive you with vain Words: for becauſe of theſe Things cometh the Wrath of God upon the Children of Diſobedience. Be not ye therefore Partakers with them: walk as Children of Light, and have no Fellowſhip with the unfruitful Works of Darkneſs* [p].

[l] 1 Cor. vi. 19. [m] 1 Cor. iii. 17. [n] 1 Pet. ii. 11.
[o] 1 John iii. 3. [p] Eph. v. 3—11.

LECTURE XXVI.

The Eighth Commandment.

UNDER the Eighth Commandment is comprehended our Duty to our Neighbour, in Reſpect of his worldly Subſtance. And, to explain it diſtinctly, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew,

I. What it forbids: and

II. What, by Conſequence, it requires.

I. As to the former. The Wickedneſs of Mankind hath invented Ways to commit ſuch an aſtoniſhing Variety of Sins againſt this Commandment, that it is impoſſible to reckon them up, and dreadful to think of them. But moſt, if not all of them, are ſo manifeſtly Sins, that the leaſt Reflection is enough to make any one ſenſible, how much he is bound conſcientiouſly to avoid them. And he, who deſires to preſerve himſelf innocent, eaſily may.

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The moſt open and ſhameleſs Crime, of this Sort, is Robbery; taking from another what is his, by Force: which, adding Violence againſt his Perſon to Invaſion of his Property, and making every Part of human Life unſafe, is a complicated Tranſgreſſion, of very deep Guilt.

The next Degree is ſecret Theft: privately converting to our own Uſe what is not our own. To do this in Matters of great Value, is confeſſedly pernicious Wickedneſs. And though it were only in what may ſeem a Trifle; yet every Man's Right to the ſmalleſt Part of what belongs to him is the ſame, as to the largeſt: and he ought no more to be wronged of one, than of the other. Beſides, little Inſtances of Diſhoneſty cauſe great Diſquiet: make the Sufferers diſtruſtful of all about them; ſometimes of thoſe, who are the fartheſt from deſerving it: make them apprehenſive continually, that ſome heavier Injury will follow. And indeed almoſt all Offenders begin with ſlight Offences. More heinous ones would ſhock them at firſt; but if they once allow themſelves in leſſer Faults; they go

on

on without Reluctance, by Degrees, to worſe and worſe, till at laſt they ſcruple nothing. Always therefore beware of ſmall Sins. And always remember, what I have already obſerved to you, that when any Thing is committed to your Care and Truſt, to be diſhoneſt in that, is peculiarly baſe.

But, beſides what every body calls Theft, there are many Practices, which amount indirectly to much the ſame Thing, however diſguiſed in the World under gentler Names. Thus, in the Way of Trade and Buſineſs: if the Seller puts off any Thing for better than it is, by falſe Aſſertions, or deceitful Arts: if he takes Advantage of the Buyer's Ignorance, or particular Neceſſities, or good Opinion of him, to inſiſt on a larger Price for it, than the current Value; or if he gives leſs in Quantity than he profeſſes, or is underſtood to give: the Frequency of ſome of theſe Things cannot alter the Nature of any of them: no one can be ignorant that they are wrong, but ſuch as are wilfully or very careleſsly ignorant: and the Declaration of Scripture againſt the laſt of them is extended, in the

ſame Place, to every one of the Reſt. *Thou ſhalt not have in thy Bag divers Weights, a great and a ſmall: thou ſhalt not have in thine Houſe divers Meaſures, a great and a ſmall. For all that do ſuch Things, and all that do unrighteouſly, are an Abomination unto the Lord thy God* [a].

On the other Hand: if the Buyer takes Advantage of his own Wealth; and the Poverty or preſent Diſtreſs of the Seller, to beat down the Price of his Merchandiſe beyond Reaſon; or if he buys up the whole of a Commodity, eſpecially if it be a neceſſary one, to make immoderate Gain of it; or if he refuſes or neglects to pay for what he hath bought; or delays his Payments beyond the Time, within which, by Agreement or the known Courſe of Traffic, they ought to be made: all ſuch Behaviour is downright Injuſtice and Breach of God's Law. For the Rule is, *If thou ſelleſt ought unto thy Neighbour, or buyeſt ought of thy Neighbour's Hand, ye ſhall not oppreſs one another* [b].

[a] Deut. xxv. 13—16. [b] Lev. xxv. 14.

Again:

Again: Borrowing on fraudulent Securities, or falſe Repreſentations of our Circumſtances, or without Intention, or without proper Care afterwards, to repay; preferring the Gratification of our Covetouſneſs, our Vanity, our Voluptuouſneſs, our Indolence, before the ſatisfying of our juſt Debts: all this is palpable Wickedneſs. And juſt as bad is the contrary Wickedneſs, of demanding exorbitant Intereſt for lending to ignorant or thoughtleſs Perſons; or to extravagant ones, for carrying on their Extravagance; or to neceſſitous ones, whoſe Neceſſities it muſt continually increaſe, and make their Ruin, after a while, more certain, more difficult to retrieve, and more hurtful to all with whom they are concerned. The Scripture hath particularly forbidden it in the laſt Caſe, and enjoined a very different Sort of Behaviour. *If thy Brother be waxen poor, and fallen in Decay with thee; then ſhalt thou relieve him: yea, though he be a Stranger, or a Sojourner. Thou ſhalt not give him thy Money upon Uſury, nor lend him thy Victuals for Increaſe; but fear thy God, that thy Brother may dwell with*

with thee[c]. And the Pſalmiſt hath expreſſed the two oppoſite Characters, on theſe Occaſions, very briefly and clearly. *The Wicked borroweth, and payeth not again: but the Righteous ſheweth Mercy, and giveth*[d].

Another crying Iniquity is, when hired Servants, Labourers, or Workmen of any Sort, are ill uſed in their Wages: whether by giving them too little; or, which is often full as bad, deferring it too long: The Word of God forbids this laſt in very ſtrong Terms. *Thou ſhalt not defraud thy Neighbour, neither rob him: the Wages of him that is hired, ſhall not abide with thee*, meaning, if demanded or wanted, *all Night until the Morning*[e]. *At his Day ſhalt thou give him his Hire; neither ſhall the Sun go down upon it; for*[f] *he is poor, and ſetteth his Heart upon it: leſt he cry againſt thee unto the Lord, and it be Sin unto thee*[g]. Nay, the Son of *Sirach* carries it, with Reaſon, (as I obſerved to you on the Sixth Commandment) further ſtill. *The Bread of the*

[c] Lev. xxv. 35, &c. [d] Pſalm xxxvii. 21. [e] Lev. xix. 13.
[f] *For*—or, *when*. [g] Deut. xxiv. 15.

Needy

Needy is their Life: he that defraudeth the Labourer of his Hire, is a Blood-Shedder [h].

But, beſides all theſe Inſtances of Unrighteouſneſs, there are many more that are frequent, in all Kinds of Contracts. Driving Bargains, that we know are too hard; or inſiſting rigidly on the Performance of them, after they appear to be ſo: making no Abatements, when bad Times, or unexpected Loſſes, or other Alterations of Circumſtances, call for them: not inquiring into the Grounds of Complaints, when there is a Likelihood of their being juſt: throwing unreaſonable Burthens upon others, merely becauſe they dare not refuſe them: keeping them to the very Words and Letter of an Agreement, contrary to the equitable Intention of it; or, on the other Hand, alledging ſome Flaw and Defect in Form, to get looſe from an Agreement, which ought to have been ſtrictly obſerved: all theſe Things are grievous Oppreſſions. And though ſome of them may not be in the leaſt contrary to Law, yet they are utterly irreconcileable with good Conſcience. Hu-

[h] Eccluſ. xxxiv. 21, 22.

man Laws cannot provide for all Caſes: and ſometimes the vileſt Iniquities may be committed under their Authority, and by their Means.

It is therefore a further lamentable Breach of this Commandment, when one Perſon puts another to the Charge and Hazard of Law unjuſtly or needleſsly; or, in ever ſo neceſſary a Law-Suit, occaſions unneceſſary Expences, and contrives unfair Delays: in ſhort, when any thing is done by either Party; by the Counſel, that plead or adviſe in the Cauſe, or by the Judge, who determines it, contrary to real Juſtice and Equity.

Indeed when Perſons, by any Means whatever, withhold from another his Right; either keeping him ignorant of it, or forcing him to unreaſonable Coſt or Trouble to obtain it; this, in its Proportion, is the ſame Kind of Injury with ſtealing from him. To ſee the Rich and Great, in theſe or any Ways, bear hard upon the Poor, is very dreadful: and truly it is little, if at all, leſs ſo, when the lower Sort of People are unmerciful, as they are but too often, one to another. For, as *Solomon* obſerves,

A poor Man that oppreſſeth the Poor, is like a ſweeping Rain, which leaveth no Food[i]. But ſuppoſe it be a Perſon ever ſo wealthy, that is wronged; ſtill his Wealth is his own, and no one can have more Right to take the leaſt Part of it from him, without his Conſent, than to rob the meaneſt Wretch in the World. Suppoſe it be a Body or Number of Men; ſuppoſe it to be the Government, the Public, that is cheated; be it of more or leſs, be it of ſo little as not to be ſenſibly miſſed; let the Guilt be divided amongſt ever ſo many; let the Practice be ever ſo common; ſtill it is the ſame Crime, however it may vary in Degrees: and the Rule is without Exception, that *no Man go beyond, or defraud his Brother in any Matter*[k].

It ſurely ſcarce needs to be added, that whatever Things it is unlawful to do, it is alſo unlawful to adviſe, encourage, help, or protect others in doing: that buying, receiving, or concealing ſtolen Goods, knowing them to be ſuch, is becoming a Partner in the Stealth: and that

[i] Prov. xxviii. 3. [k] 1 Theſſ. iv. 6.

being any Way a Patron, Aſſiſtant, or Tool of Injuſtice, is no leſs evidently wrong, than being the immediate and principal Agent in it.

And as the Wrongneſs of all theſe Things is very plain, ſo is the Folly of them. Common Robbers and Thieves are the moſt miſerable Set of Wretches upon Earth: in perpetual Danger, perpetual Frights and Alarms; obliged to ſupport their Spirits by continual Exceſſes, which, after the gay Madneſs of a few Hours, depreſs them to the moſt painful Lowneſs; confined to the moſt hateful and helliſh Society; very ſoon, generally ſpeaking, betrayed by their deareſt Companions, or hunted out by vigilant Officers; then ſhut up in Horror, condemned to open Shame, if not to an untimely Death; and the more ſurely undone for ever in the next Life, the more inſenſible they are of their Sufferings and their Sins in this.

Nor do they, of whoſe Guilt the Law can take little or no Cognizance, eſcape a heavy and bitter Self-Condemnation from Time to Time; nor uſually the bad Opinion

of the World; which laſt alone will frequently do them more Harm, than any unfair Practices will do them Good. But eſpecially this holds in the middle and lower, which is vaſtly the larger, Part of Mankind. Their Livelihood depends chiefly on their Character; and their Character depends on their Honeſty. This will make Amends for many other Defects; but nothing will make Amends for the Want of this. Deceitful Craft may ſeem perhaps a ſhorter Method of Gain, than Uprightneſs and Diligence. But they, who get wickedly, ſpend, for the moſt Part, fooliſhly, perhaps wickedly too: and ſo all that ſtays by them is their Guilt. Or let them be ever ſo cunning, and appear for a while to thrive ever ſo faſt; yet remember the Sayings of the wiſe King: *An Inheritance may be gotten haſtily at the Beginning; but the End thereof ſhall not be bleſſed* [l]. *Treaſures of Wickedneſs profit nothing: but Righteouſneſs delivereth from Death* [m]. *Wealth, gotten by Vanity, ſhall be diminiſhed: but he that gathereth by Labour, ſhall increaſe* [n]. Or, ſhould the Proſperity

[l] Prov. xx. 21. [m] Prov. x. 2. [n] Prov. xiii. 11.

of Perſons, who raiſe themſelves by ill Means, laſt as long as their Lives; yet their Lives may be cut ſhort. For what the Prophet threatens, often comes to paſs, and is always to be feared: *He that getteth Riches, and not by Right, ſhall leave them in the Midſt of his Days, and at his End ſhall be a Fool* [o]. But ſhould his Days on Earth be extended to the utmoſt; yet *the Sinner, an hundred Years old, ſhall be accurſed* [p]. For *the Unrighteous ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God* [q]: but *the Lord is the Avenger of all ſuch* [r].

Let every one therefore conſider ſeriouſly, in the firſt Place, what this Commandment forbids; and abſtain from it. Though he fare more hardly; though he lay up leſs; though he be deſpiſed for his Conſcientiouſneſs, provided it be a reaſonable one; ſurely it is well worth while to bear theſe Things, rather than injure our Fellow-Creatures, and offend our Maker.

But let us now proceed to conſider,

II. What the Commandment before us, by Conſequence, requires. And,

[o] Jer. xvii. 11. [p] Iſa. lxv. 20. [q] 1 Cor. vi. 9. [r] 1 Theſſ. iv. 6.

1. It

1. It requires Reſtitution of whatever we have, at any Time, unjuſtly taken or detained. For, that being in Right not our own, but another's; keeping it is continuing and carrying on the Injuſtice. Therefore the Prophet *Ezekiel* makes it an expreſs Condition of Forgiveneſs: *If the Wicked reſtore the Pledge, and give again that he had robbed; then he ſhall ſurely live, he ſhall not die*[s]. Nor was it till *Zaccheus* had engaged to reſtore amply what he had extorted from any one, that our Saviour declared, *This Day is Salvation come to this Houſe*[t]. So that to think of raiſing Wealth by Fraud, and then growing honeſt, is the ſilleſt Scheme in the World: for till we have returned, or offered to return, as far as we can, all that we have gotten by Fraud, we are not honeſt. Nay, ſuppoſe we have ſpent and ſquandered it, ſtill we remain Debtors for it. Nay, ſuppoſe we got nothing, ſuppoſe we meant to get nothing, by any wicked Contrivances, in which we have been concerned; yet if we have cauſed another's Loſs, any Loſs for which Money is

[s] Ezek. xxxiii. 15. [t] Luke xix. 8, 9.

a proper Compenſation; what we ought never to have done, we ought to undo as ſoon and as completely as we are able, however we ſtraiten ourſelves by it; otherwiſe we come ſhort of making the Amends, which may juſtly be expected from us: and, while ſo important a Part of Repentance is wanting, to demonſtrate the Sincerity of the reſt, we cannot hope to be accepted with God.

2. This Commandment alſo requires Induſtry: without which, the Generality of Perſons cannot maintain themſelves honeſtly. Therefore St. *Paul* directs: *Let him that ſtole, ſteal no more: but rather let him* (and certainly, by Conſequence, every one elſe that needs) *labour, working with his Hands the Thing which is good* [u]. And each of them is to labour, not only for himſelf, but his Family alſo, if he hath one: both for their preſent, and, if poſſible, their future Maintenance, in Caſe of Sickneſs, Accidents, or old Age. For as they, who belong to him, have, both by Nature and by Law, a Claim to Support from him, if they need it, and

[u] Eph. iv. 28.

he

he can give it; neglecting to make due Proviſion for them is wronging them; and throwing either them or himſelf upon others, when he may avoid it, or however might have avoided it by proper Diligence, is wronging others. For which Reaſon the ſame Apoſtle *commanded* likewiſe, *that if any one would not work, neither ſhould he eat*[w].

In order to be juſt therefore, be induſtrious: and doubt not but you will find it, after a while at leaſt, by much the moſt comfortable, as well as Chriſtian, Way of getting a Livelihood. It is a Way, that no one ought to think beneath him. For *better is he that laboureth, and aboundeth in all Things, than he that boaſteth himſelf, and wanteth Bread*[x]. It is the beſt Preſervative that can be, from bad Company and bad Courſes. It procures the good Will and good Word of Mankind. It exempts Perſons from the Contempt and Reproach of which thoſe have bitter Experience, who make a dependent State their Choice. *Begging is ſweet in the Mouth of the Shameleſs: but in his Belly there ſhall burn a Fire*[y].

[w] 2 Theſſ. iii. 10. [x] Eccluſ. x. 27. [y] Eccluſ. xl. 30.

Very

Very different from this, is the Caſe of the Induſtrious. Their Minds are at Eaſe: their Bodies are uſually healthy: their Time is employed as they know it ſhould: what they get, they enjoy with a good Conſcience, and it wears well. Nor do only the Fruits of their Labour delight them: but even Labour itſelf becomes pleaſant to them.

And though Perſons of higher Condition are not bound to *work with their Hands*; yet they alſo muſt be diligent in other Ways: in the Buſineſs of their Offices and Profeſſions; or, if they have none, yet in the Care of their Families and Affairs. Elſe the former will be ill-governed, wicked and miſerable: and the latter ſoon run into ſuch Diſorder, as will almoſt force them, either to be unjuſt to their Creditors, and thoſe for whom Nature binds them to provide; or to be guilty of mean and diſhonourable Actions of more Kinds than one, to avoid theſe and other diſagreeable Conſequences of their Supineneſs. Beſides, as the upper Part of the World are peculiarly deſtined by Providence to be in one

Way

Way or another extenſively uſeful in Society: ſuch of them as are not, defraud it of the Service they owe it, and therefore break this Commandment. But

3. To obſerve it well, Frugality muſt be joined with Induſtry: elſe it will all be Labour in vain. For unwiſe Expenſiveneſs will diſſipate whatever the utmoſt Diligence can acquire. But if Idleneſs be added to Extravagance, that brings on quick Ruin. And if Intemperance and Debauchery go along with them, the Caſe is then come to its Extremity. Every one therefore, who deſires to approve himſelf honeſt, ſhould be careful to live within the Bounds of his Income, ſo as to have ſomething in Readineſs againſt the Time of Inability and unforeſeen Events. But they who have, or deſign to have Families, ſhould endeavour to live a good deal within thoſe Bounds. And whoever ſpends upon himſelf, or throws away upon any other Perſon or Thing, more than he can prudently afford, (whatever falſe Names of Praiſe, as Elegance, Generoſity, Good-nature, may be given to this Indiſcretion)

will

will be led, before he is aware, to diſtreſs himſelf, perhaps many more; and be too probably driven at laſt to repair, as well as he can, by Wickedneſs, the Breaches, which he hath made by Folly.

4. This Commandment requires in the laſt Place, that we neither deny ourſelves, or thoſe who belong to us, what is fit for our and their Station, which is one Kind of Robbery; nor omit to relieve the Poor according to our Ability, which is another Kind. For whatever we enjoy of worldly Plenty is given us in Truſt, that we ſhould take our own Share with Moderation, and diſtribute out of the Remainder with Liberality. And as they, who have but little, will, moſt or all of them, at one Time or another, find thoſe who have leſs; very few, if any, are exempted from giving ſome Alms. And whoever either penuriouſly or thoughtleſsly neglects his proper Share of this Duty, is unjuſt to his Maker and his Fellow-Creatures too. For the *Good*, which God hath placed in our Hands for the Poor, is undoubtedly, as the Scripture declares it, *their Due*. He hath given them

no

no Right to ſeize it: but he hath bound us not to *withhold*[z] it from them.

And now, having finiſhed the two Heads propoſed, I ſhall only add, that by obſerving theſe Directions from a Principle of Chriſtian Faith; and teaching all under our Care to obſerve them from the ſame; the Poor in this World may be *rich towards God*[a]: and the rich may *treaſure up in Store for themſelves a good Foundation againſt the Time to come*, which will enable them to *lay hold on eternal Life*[b].

[z] Prov. iii. 27. [a] Luke xii. 21. [b] 1 Tim. vi. 19.

LECTURE XXVII.

The Ninth Commandment.

THE Ninth Commandment is connected with every one of the four, which precede it. For neither the Duties of Superiors and Inferiors, nor thoſe amongſt Equals, could be tolerably practiſed; neither the Lives of Men, nor their Happineſs in the neareſt Relation of Life, nor their Poſſeſſions and Properties could ever be ſecure; if they were left expoſed to thoſe Injuries of a licentious Tongue, which are here prohibited. This Commandment therefore was intended, partly to ſtrengthen the foregoing ones; and partly alſo, to make Proviſion for every Perſon's juſt Character on its own Account, as well as for the Sake of Conſequences. For, independently on theſe, we have by Nature (and with Reaſon) a great Concern about our Reputations.

tions. And therefore the Precept, *Thou ſhalt not bear falſe Witneſs againſt thy Neighbour*, is, in all Views, of much Importance.

The Crime, at which theſe Words principally and moſt expreſsly point, is, giving falſe Evidence in any Cauſe or Trial. And as, in ſuch Caſes, Evidence hath always been given upon Oath; this Commandment, ſo far, is the ſame with the Third: only there, Perjury is forbidden, as Impiety againſt God; here, as injurious to Men. Now we are guilty of this Sin, if, in bearing Witneſs, we affirm that we know or believe any Thing, which we do not; or deny that we know or believe any Thing, which we do; or either affirm or deny more poſitively, than we have good Grounds. Nay, if we only ſtifle, by our Silence, any Fact, which is material, though we are not examined particularly about it; ſtill when we have ſworn in general to ſpeak the whole Truth, we bear falſe Witneſs, if we deſignedly avoid it; eſpecially after being aſked, if we are able to ſay any Thing beſides, relative to the Point in Queſtion. For hiding a Truth may as totally miſlead

thoſe

thoſe who are to judge, as telling an Untruth. Indeed, if by any Means whatever we diſguiſe the real State of the Caſe, inſtead of relating it in the faireſt and plaineſt Manner that we can: we evidently tranſgreſs the Intent of this Commandment. And by doing it, the good Name, the Property, the Livelihood, the Life of an innocent Perſon may be taken away; the Advantages of Society defeated, nay, perverted into Miſchiefs, and the very Bonds of it diſſolved. Therefore the Rule of the Moſaic Law is: *If a falſe Witneſs riſe up againſt any Man, and teſtify againſt his Brother that which is wrong; then ſhall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his Brother, and thine Eye ſhall not pity*[a]. With us indeed, the Puniſhment extends not ſo far. But however mild ſuch Perſons may find the Penalties of human Laws to be, or how artfully ſoever they may evade them; God hath declared: *A falſe Witneſs ſhall not be unpuniſhed: and he that ſpeaketh Lies, ſhall not eſcape*[b].

[a] Deut. xix. 16—21. [b] Prov. xix. 5.

The Commandment ſaith only, that we ſhall not bear falſe Witneſs *againſt* our Neighbour: but in Effect it binds us equally not to bear falſe Witneſs for him. For in all Trials of Property, bearing Witneſs for one Party is bearing Witneſs againſt the other. And in all Trials for Crimes, falſe Evidence, to the Advantage of the Perſon accuſed, is to the Diſadvantage and Ruin of Right and Truth, of public Safety and Peace; by concealing and encouraging what ought to be detected and puniſhed.

It being thus criminal to bear falſe Witneſs; it muſt be criminal alſo to draw Perſons into the Commiſſion of ſo great a Sin, by Gifts, or Promiſes, or Threatenings, or any other Method. And, in its Degree, it muſt be criminal to bring a falſe Accuſation, or falſe Action againſt any one; or to make any Sort of Demand, for which there is no reaſonable Ground.

Nay further, however favourably Perſons are apt to think of the Defendant's Side; yet to defend ourſelves againſt Juſtice, or even to delay it by unfair Methods, is very wicked. For it ought to take Place;

and the ſooner, the better. Still, both the Profeſſors of the Law, and others, may unqueſtionably ſay and do, for a doubtful or a bad Cauſe, whatever can be ſaid with Truth, or done with Equity: for otherwiſe it might be thought ſtill worſe than it is; and treated worſe than it deſerves. But if they do, in any Cauſe, what in Reaſon ought not to be done: if they uſe or ſuggeſt indirect Methods of defeating the Intent of Law; if, by falſe Colours and Gloſſes, by terrifying or confounding Witneſſes, by calumniating or ridiculing the adverſe Party, they endeavour to make Juſtice itſelf an Inſtrument for patronizing Injuſtice; this is *turning Judgment into Gall*, as the Scripture expreſſes it, *and the Fruit of Righteouſneſs into Hemlock*[c].

But in a ſtill higher Degree is it ſo, if Judges or Jurymen are influenced, in giving their Sentence or Verdict, by Intereſt, Relation, Friendſhip, Hatred, Compaſſion, Party; by any Thing, but the Nature of the Caſe, as it fairly appears to them. For deſignedly making a falſe Determination,

[c] Amos vi. 12.

is completing all the Miſchief, which bearing falſe Witneſs only attempts. And, in a Word, whoever any Way promotes what is wrong, or obſtructs what is right, partakes in the ſame Sin: be it either of the Parties, their Evidences or Agents: be it the higheſt Magiſtrate, or the loweſt Officer.

But Perſons may break this Commandment, not only in judicial Proceedings; but, often full as grievouſly, in common Diſcourſe: by raiſing, ſpreading, or countenancing falſe Reports againſt others; or ſuch, as they have no ſufficient Cauſe to think true; which is the Caſe, in Part at leaſt, of moſt Reports: by miſrepreſenting their Circumſtances in the World to their Prejudice; or ſpeaking, without Foundation, to the Diſadvantage of their Perſons, Underſtandings, Accompliſhments, Temper, or Conduct; whether charging them with Faults and Imperfections, which do not belong to them; or taking from them good Qualities and Recommendations, which do; or aggravating the former, or diminiſhing the latter: determining their Characters

from a ſingle bad Action or two; fixing ill Names on Things, which are really virtuous or innocent in them; imputing their laudable Behaviour to blameable or worthleſs Motives: making no Allowance for the Depravity or Weakneſs of human Nature, Strength of Temptation, Want of Inſtruction, wicked Inſinuations, vicious Examples. And in all theſe Ways, Perſons may be injured, either by open public Aſſertions; or more dangerouſly perhaps, by ſecret Whiſpers, which they have no Opportunity of contradicting. The Scandal may be accompanied with ſtrong Expreſſions of hoping it is not true, or being very ſorry for it; and warm Declarations of great good Will to the Party, whom it concerns; all which may ſerve only to give it a more unſuſpected Credit. Nay, it may be conveyed very effectually in dark Hints, expreſſive Geſtures, or even affected Silence. And theſe, as they may be equally miſchievous, are not leſs wicked, for being more cowardly and more artful, Methods of Defamation.

Further yet: Speaking or intimating Things to any Perſon's Diſadvantage, though

they be true, is ſeldom innocent. For it uſually proceeds from bad Principles: Revenge, Envy, Malice, Pride, Cenſoriouſneſs; unfair Zeal for ſome private or Party Intereſt; or at beſt, from Deſire of appearing to know more than others, or mere impertinent Fondneſs of talking. Now theſe are wretched Motives for publiſhing what will be hurtful to one of our Brethren. Sometimes indeed bad Characters and bad Actions ought to be known: but much oftener not, or not to all the World, or not by our Means. And we have Need to be very careful from what Inducements we act in ſuch a Caſe. Sometimes again Things are known already; or ſoon will be known, let us be ever ſo ſilent about them: and then to be ſure, we are more at Liberty. But even then, to take Pleaſure in relating the Faults of others is by no means right. And to reveal them, when they can be hid, unleſs a very conſiderable Reaſon require it, is extremely wrong.

Indeed we ſhould be cautious, not only what Harm, but what Good we ſay of others. For ſpeaking too highly of their

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Characters or Circumſtances, or praiſing them in any Reſpect beyond Truth, is *bearing falſe Witneſs* about them, which may ſometimes turn againſt them: and may often miſlead thoſe, to whom we exalt them thus; and produce grievouſly bad Conſequences of many Kinds. But the other is much the more common, and uſually the more hurtful, Extreme.

We all think it an Injury, in the tendereſt Part, when bad Impreſſions are made on others concerning us; and therefore ſhould conſcientiouſly avoid doing the ſame Injury to others. Making them deſignedly, without Cauſe, is inexcuſable Wickedneſs. And even where we intend no Harm, we may do a great deal. Whatever hurts, in any Reſpect, the Reputation of Perſons, always gives them great Pain, and often doth them great Prejudice, even in their moſt important Concerns. For indeed almoſt every Thing in this World depends on Character. And when once that hath ſuffered an Imputation; for the moſt Part, neither the Perſons calumniated, be they ever ſo innocent, can recover it completely by their

own Endeavours, nor the Perſons who have wronged them, be they ever ſo deſirous, reſtore it fully to its former State: though certainly they, who rob others of their good Name, or even without Deſign aſperſe it, are full as much bound to make Reſtitution for that, as for any other Damage, which they cauſe. But were they not to hurt at all the Perſon againſt whom they ſpeak, ſtill they hurt themſelves, and leſſen their Power of doing Good in the World; they often hurt their innocent Families by the Provocations which they give; they grieve their Friends; they ſet a miſchievous Example in Society; and, if they profeſs any Religion, bring a dreadful Reproach upon it, by a Temper and Behaviour ſo juſtly hateful to Mankind.

It will eaſily be underſtood, that, next to the Raiſers and Spreaders of ill Reports, they who encourage Perſons of that Kind, by hearkening to them with Pleaſure, and by Readineſs of Belief in what they ſay, contradict the Intention of this Commandment. Indeed we ought, far from countenancing Scandal and Detraction, to expreſs,

preſs, in all proper Ways, our Diſlike of it: ſhew the Uncertainty, the Improbability, the Falſehood, if we can, of injurious Rumours; oppoſe the divulging even of Truths that are uncharitable; and ſet a Pattern of giving every one his juſt Praiſe.

It muſt now be obſerved further, that though undoubtedly thoſe Falſehoods are the worſt, which hurt others the moſt directly, yet Falſehoods in general are hurtful and wrong. And therefore Lying; all Uſe either of Words or Actions of known ſettled Import, with Purpoſe to deceive; is unlawful. And thoſe Offences of this Kind, which may ſeem the moſt harmleſs, have yet commonly great Evil in them. Lying deſtroys the very End of Speech, and leads us into perpetual Miſtakes, by the very Means which God intended ſhould lead us into Truth. It puts an End to all the Pleaſure, all the Benefit, all the Safety of Converſation. Nobody can know, on what or whom to depend. For if one Perſon may lie, why not another? and at this Rate, no Juſtice can be done, no Wickedneſs be prevented or puniſhed, no Buſineſs

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go forward. All these Mischiefs will equally follow, whether Untruths be told in a gross barefaced Manner, or disguised under Equivocations, Quibbles, and Evasions. The Sin therefore is as great in one Case as the other. And it is so great in both, that no sufficient Excuses can ever be made for it in either, though several are often pleaded.

Many Persons imagine, that, when they have committed a Fault, it is very pardonable to conceal it under a Lie. But some Faults ought not to be concealed at all; and none by this Method; which is committing two, instead of one; and the second not uncommonly worse than the first. An ingenuous Confession will be likely, in most Cases, to procure an easy Pardon: but a Lie is a monstrous Aggravation of an Offence; and persisting in a Lie can very hardly be forgiven. But above all, if any Persons, to hide what they have done amiss themselves, are so vile as to throw the Blame or the Suspicion of it upon another; this is the Height of Wickedness. And therefore particularly all Children and Servants, who are chiefly

chiefly tempted to excuſe themſelves by telling Falſehoods, ought to undergo any Thing, rather than be guilty of ſuch a Sin. And on the other Hand, all Parents, Maſters, and Miſtreſſes, ought to beware of puniſhing them too ſeverely for their other Offences; leſt they drive them into a Habit of this terrible one.

Some again plead for making free with Truth, that they do it only in Jeſt. But theſe Jeſts of theirs often occaſion great Uneaſineſs and Diſquiet; and ſometimes other very ſerious bad Conſequences. The Scripture therefore hath paſſed a ſevere Cenſure upon them. *As a Madman, who caſteth Fire-Brands, Arrows, and Death; ſo is the Man that deceiveth his Neighbour, and ſaith, Am I not in Sport*[d]*?* To give another Perſon Vexation, or make him appear contemptible, though in a ſlight Inſtance, is by no Means innocent Sport. And beſides, to ſpeak Falſehood on any Occaſion is a dangerous Introduction to ſpeaking it on more, if not all, Occaſions. For if ſo trifling a Motive as a Jeſt will prevail on us

[d] Prov. xxvi. 19.

to violate Truth, how can we be expected to withſtand more weighty Temptations?

However, it may perhaps at leaſt be thought, that lying, to prevent Miſchief and do good, muſt be permitted. But the Scripture expreſly forbids us to *do Evil, that Good may come*[e]. And they, who allow themſelves in it, will uſually be diſcovered and loſe their End: or, if not, will never know where to ſtop. They will be enticed by Degrees to think every Thing good, that ſerves their Turn, let others think it ever ſo bad: thoſe others again will think themſelves authorized by ſuch Examples to take the ſame Liberties: and thus all Truſt and Probity will be loſt amongſt Men: a much greater Evil, than any Good, which Falſehood may do now and then, will ever compenſate.

And if telling Lies, even from theſe plauſible Inducements, be ſo bad; what muſt it be, when they proceed from leſs excuſable ones, as Deſire of promoting our own Intereſt, or that of our Party: and how completely deteſtable, when we are prompt-

[e] Rom. iii. 8.

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ed to them by Malice, or undue Reſentment, or any other totally wicked Principle!

Nor is the Practice leſs imprudent, than it is unlawful. Some indeed lye to raiſe their Characters, as others do to gain their Points. But both act very abſurdly. For they miſs of their Purpoſe entirely, as ſoon as they are found out: and all Lyars are found out; immediately, for the moſt Part; but in a while without Fail. And after that, every body deſpiſes and hates them: even when they ſpeak Truth, nobody knows how to credit them: and ſo, by aiming wickedly at ſome little Advantage for the preſent, they put themſelves fooliſhly under the greateſt Diſadvantage in the World ever after. *The Lip of Truth ſhall be eſtabliſhed for ever: but a lying Tongue is but for a Moment*[f]. Beware then of the leaſt Beginning of a Practice that will be ſure to end ill. For if you venture upon Falſehood at all, it will grow upon you, and entangle you; and bring you to Shame, to Puniſhment, to Ruin. And, beſides what you

[f] Prov. xii. 19, 22.

will

will ſuffer by it here, your Portion, unleſs you repent very deeply, and amend very thoroughly, will be with the Father of Lies hereafter. For *into* the heavenly *Jeruſalem ſhall in no wiſe enter whoſoever worketh Abomination, or maketh a Lie*[g]. *Lying Lips are Abomination to the Lord: but they, that deal truly, are his Delight*[h].

There is yet another Sort of Falſehood, often full as bad as affirming what we do not think: I mean, promiſing what we do not intend; or what we neglect afterwards to perform, ſo ſoon, or ſo fully, as we ought. Whoever hath promiſed, hath made himſelf a Debtor: and, unleſs he be punctual in his Payment, commits an Injuſtice; which in many Caſes may be of very pernicious Conſequence.

Now in order to ſecure this great Point of ſpeaking Truth: beſides conſidering carefully and frequently the before-mentioned Evils of departing from it, we ſhould be attentive alſo to moderate the Quantity of our Diſcourſe, leſt we fall into Falſehood unawares. For *in the Multitude of Words*

[g] Rev. xxi. 27. [h] Prov. xii. 22.

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there wanteth not Sin: but he that refraineth his Lips, is wise[i]. Perſons, who ſuffer themſelves to run on heedleſsly in Talk, juſt as their preſent Humour diſpoſes them, or the preſent Company will be beſt pleaſed; or who will ſay almoſt any Thing, rather than ſay nothing; muſt be perpetually tranſgreſſing ſome of the Duties comprehended under this Commandment; which yet it is of the utmoſt Importance not to tranſgreſs. For, with Reſpect to the Concerns of this World, *He that loveth Life, and would ſee good Days, let him refrain his Tongue from Evil; and his Lips, that they ſpeak no Guile*[k]. And, as to our eternal State in the next, *If any Man ſeem to be religious, and bridleth not his Tongue, that Man's Religion is vain*[l].

[i] Prov. x. 19. [k] Pſ. xxxiv. 12, 13. [l] Jam. i. 26.

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LECTURE XXVIII.

The Tenth Commandment.

WE are now come to the tenth and laſt Commandment; which is by the Church of *Rome* abſurdly divided into two, to keep up the Number, after joining the firſt and ſecond into one, contrary to ancient Authority, Jewiſh and Chriſtian. How the Miſtake was originally made, is hard to ſay: but undoubtedly they retain and defend it the more earneſtly, in order to paſs over the ſecond Commandment, as only Part of the firſt, without any diſtinct Meaning of its own. And accordingly many of their devotional Books omit it entirely. But that theſe two ought not to be thus joined and confounded, I have ſhewn you already. And that this, now before us, ought not to be divided, is extremely evident: for it is one ſingle Prohibition of all

unjuſt Deſires. And if reckoning up the ſeveral prohibited Objects of Deſire makes it more than one Commandment; for the ſame Reaſon it will be more than two. For there are ſix Things forbidden in it particularly, beſides all the reſt, that are forbidden in general. And, moreover, if this be two Commandments, which is the firſt of them? For in *Exodus* it begins, *Thou ſhalt not covet thy Neighbour's Houſe:* but in Deuteronomy, *Thou ſhalt not covet thy Neighbour's Wife.* And accordingly ſome of their Books of Devotion make the former, ſome the latter of theſe, the ninth [a]. Surely the Order of the Words would never have been changed thus in Scripture, had there been two Commandments in them [b]: but

[a] Their Manual of Prayers in Engliſh, 1725, puts, *Thou ſhalt not covet thy Neighbour's Wife*, for the Ninth. But in the Office of the Virgin, both Latin and Engliſh, called the Primer, 1717, *Thou ſhalt not covet thy Neighbour's Houſe*, is the Ninth.

[b] Indeed the Vatican Copy of the Septuagint in Exodus places, *Thou ſhalt not commit Adultery*, before *Thou ſhalt do no Murder*. And ſo do Mark x. 19. Luke xviii. 20. Rom. xiii. 9. and Philo, and Part of the Fathers. But the Hebrew and Samaritan, and all Tranſlations, excepting the Septuagint, and even That in Deuteronomy, and I believe moſt Copies of it

but being one, it is no way material, which Part is named firſt. I ſay no more therefore on ſo clear a Point: but proceed to explain this Precept, of *not coveting what is our Neighbour's.*

The good Things of this Life being the Gifts of God, for which all are to be thankful to him; deſiring, with due Moderation and Submiſſion, a comfortable Share of them, is very natural and right. Wiſhing, that our Share were better, is, in the Caſe of many Perſons, ſo far from a Sin, that endeavouring diligently to make it better is Part of their Duty. Wiſhing it were equal to that of ſuch another, is not wiſhing ill to him, but only well to ourſelves. And ſeeking to obtain what belongs to another may, in proper Circumſtances, be perfectly innocent. We may really have Occaſion for it; he may be well able to beſtow it; or he may have Occaſion for ſomething of

it in Exodus, and Matth. xix. 18. and Joſephus, and another Part of the Fathers, keep the now common Order. And the Evangeliſts did not intend to obſerve the original Order: for they put, *Honour thy Father*, &c. laſt. And St. Paul doth not ſay, that he intended to obſerve it. This therefore is not a parallel Caſe to that of the Tenth Commandment.

ours in Return. And on these mutual Wants of Men all Commerce and Trade is founded: which God, without Question, designed should be carried on; because he hath made all Countries abound in some Things, and left them deficient in others.

Not every Sort of Desires therefore, but unfit and immoderate Desires only, are forbidden by the Words, *Thou shalt not covet.* And these are such as follow. First, If our Neighbour cannot lawfully part with his Property, nor we lawfully receive it: and yet we want to have it. One Instance of this Kind is expressed, *Thou shall not covet thy Neighbour's Wife.* Another is, if we want a Person who possesses any Thing in Trust, or under certain Limitations, to give or sell it in Breach of that Trust or those Limitations. Or if he can part with it, but is not willing; and we entertain Thoughts of acquiring it by Force or Fraud; or of being revenged on him for his Refusal; this also is highly blameable: for why should not he be left quietly free Master of his own? Indeed barely pressing and importuning Persons, contrary to their Interest,

or even their Inclinations only, is in ſome Degree wrong: for it is one Way of extorting Things from them; or however, of giving them Trouble, where we have no Right to give it.

But though we keep our Deſires ever ſo much to ourſelves, they may notwithſtanding be very ſinful. And ſuch they are particularly, if they induce us to envy others: that is, to be uneaſy at their imagined ſuperior Happineſs, to wiſh them ill, or take Pleaſure in any Harm which befalls them. For this Turn of Mind will prompt us to do them ill, if we can: as indeed a great Part of the Miſchief that is done in the World, and ſome of the worſt of it, ariſes from hence. *Wrath is cruel, and Anger is outrageous: but who is able to ſtand againſt Envy*[c]? Accordingly we find it joined in the New Teſtament with *Strife, Railing, Variance, Sedition, Murder, Confuſion, and every evil Work*[d]. But were it to produce no Miſchief to our Neighbour, yet it is the

[c] Prov. xxvii. 4.

[d] Rom. i. 29. xiii. 13. 1 Cor. iii. 3. 2 Cor. xii. 20. Gal. v, 20, 21. 1 Tim. vi. 4. Jam. iii. 14, 16.

directly oppoſite Diſpoſition to that Love of him, which is the ſecond great Precept of Chriſt's Religion. Nay indeed it deſerves, in ſome Reſpects, to be reckoned the worſt of ill-natured Sins. The revengeful Man pleads for himſelf ſome Injury attempted againſt him: but the envious Perſon bears unprovoked Malice to thoſe, who have done him neither Wrong nor Harm, ſolely becauſe he fancies them to be, in this or that Inſtance, very happy. And why ſhould they not, if they can; as he certainly would, if he could? For the Proſperity of bad People, it muſt be confeſſed, we have Reaſon to be ſo far ſorry, as they are likely to do Hurt by it. But to deſire their Fall, rather than their Amendment; to deſire what may be grievous to any Perſons, not from good Will to Mankind, but from ill Will to them; to wiſh any Misfortune even to our Competitors and Rivals, merely becauſe they are ſuch; or becauſe they have ſucceeded, and enjoy what we aimed at; is extremely uncharitable and inhuman. It is a Temper that will give us perpetual Diſquiet in this World, (for there will always

be ſomebody to envy) and bring a heavy Sentence upon us in the next, unleſs we repent of it, and ſubdue it firſt.

But though our ſelfiſh Deſires were to raiſe in us no Malignity againſt our Fellow-Creatures; yet if they tempt us to murmur againſt our Creator; and either to ſpeak or think ill of that Diſtribution of Things, which his Providence hath made; this is great Impiety, and Rebellion of the Heart againſt God: who hath an abſolute Right to diſpoſe of the Works of his Hands as He pleaſes; and uſes it always both with Juſtice and with Goodneſs to us. Were we innocent, we could none of us demand more Advantages of any Sort, than He thought fit to give us: but as we are guilty Wretches; far from having a Claim to this or that Degree of Happineſs, we are every one liable to ſevere Puniſhment. And therefore, with the many Comforts and Bleſſings which we have now, and the eternal Felicity which, through the Mercy of our heavenly Father, the Merits of our bleſſed Redeemer, and the Grace of the Holy Spirit, we may, if we will, have hereafter; ſurely, we have no

Ground to complain of our Condition. For what if Things be unequally divided here? We may be certain the Diſpoſer of them hath wiſe Reaſons for it, whether we can ſee them or not: and we may be as certain, that, unleſs it be our own Fault, we ſhall be no Loſers by it: for *all Things work together for Good to them that love God*[e]. Therefore, how little ſoever we enjoy, we have Cauſe to be thankful for it: and how much ſoever we ſuffer, we have Cauſe to be reſigned; nay thankful too, even for that; as we may be happier in this World for many of our Sufferings; and ſhall, if we bear them as we ought, be improved in Goodneſs by them all, and made happier to Eternity.

But further yet: though we may not be conſcious of what we ſhall ſtudy to hide from ourſelves, that our Deſires carry us, either to behave or wiſh ill to our Neighbours, or to repine againſt God: ſtill, if they diſturb and agitate our Minds; if we are eager and vehement about the Objects of them; we are not arrived at the State, in

[e] Rom. viii. 28.

which

which we ſhould be found. Some Feeling of this inward Tumult, eſpecially on trying Occaſions, may be unavoidable by fallen Man; and more of it natural to one Perſon than another: but after all, it is voluntary Indulgence, that gives our Appetites, and Paſſions, and Fancies, the far greateſt Share of their Dominion. We inflame them, when elſe they would be moderate: we affect Things, for which we have really no Liking, merely becauſe they are faſhionable: we create imaginary Wants to ourſelves; and then grow as earneſt for what we might do perfectly well without, as if the whole of our Felicity conſiſted in it. This is a very immoral State of Mind: and hurries Perſons, almoſt irreſiſtibly, into as immoral a Courſe of Life. In Proportion as worldly Inclinations of any Kind engage the Heart, they exclude from it ſocial Affection, Compaſſion, Generoſity, Integrity; and yet more effectually Love to God, and Attention to the Concerns of our future State. Nor do they almoſt ever fail to make us at preſent miſerable, as well as wicked. They prey upon our Spirits, torment us with

with perpetual Self-Diſlike, waſte our Health, ſink our Character, drive us into a thouſand fooliſh Actions to gratify them; and, when all is done, can never be gratified, ſo as to give us any laſting Satisfaction. Firſt, we ſhall be full of Anxieties and Fears: when we have got over theſe and obtained our Wiſh, we ſhall quickly find it comes very ſhort of our Expectation: then we ſhall be cloyed, and tired, and wretchedly languid, till ſome new Craving ſets us on Work to as little Purpoſe as the former did; or till we are wiſe enough to ſee, that ſuch Purſuits are not the Way to Happineſs.

But ſuppoſing Perſons are not violent in purſuing the imagined good Things of this World; yet if they be dejected and grieved, that no more of them have fallen to their Lot; if they mourn over the Inferiority of their Condition, and live in a perpetual Feeling of Affliction (be it ever ſo calm) on that Account; or indeed on Account of any Croſs or Diſadvantage whatever, belonging to the preſent Life: this alſo is a Degree, though the loweſt and leaſt, yet ſtill a Degree, of inordinate Deſire. For we are not

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grateful, if, inſtead of taking our Portion of Happineſs here with Chearfulneſs, and due Acknowledgments for it, we only lament, that it is not, in this or that Reſpect, more conſiderable: and we are not wiſe, if we embitter it, be it ever ſo ſmall, by a fruitleſs Sorrow, inſtead of making the beſt of it.

Theſe then being the Exceſſes, which this Commandment forbids; the Duty, which of Courſe it requires, is, that we *learn*, like St. *Paul*, *in whatſoever State we are, therewith to be content*[f]. This Virtue every body practiſes in ſome Caſes: for who is there, that could not mention ſeveral Things which he ſhould be glad to have, yet is perfectly well ſatisfied to go without them? And would we but ſtrive to be of the ſame Diſpoſition in all Caſes; the Self-Enjoyment, that we ſhould reap from it, is inexpreſſible. The worldly Condition of Multitudes is really quite as good as it needs to be; and of many others (who do not think ſo) as good as it well can be. Now for ſuch to be anxious about mending it, is

[f] Phil. iv. 11.

only

only being miſerable for nothing. And in whatever we may have Cauſe to wiſh our Circumſtances were better, moderate Wiſhes will be ſufficient to excite a reaſonable Induſtry to improve them, as far as we can: and immoderate Eagerneſs will give us no Aſſiſtance, but only Diſquiet. More than a few conſume themſelves with longing for what Indolence and Deſpondency will not ſuffer them to try if they can obtain. *The Deſire of the Slothful killeth him: for his Hands refuſe to labour*[s]. And ſometimes, on the contrary, the Precipitance, with which we aim at a favourite Point, is the very Reaſon that we overſhoot the Mark, and miſs it.

But ſuppoſing the moſt ſollicitous were always the moſt likely to gain their Ends: yet this Likelihood will be often croſſed, both by Delays and Diſappointments; which to impatient Tempers will be extremely grievous: and the ſaddeſt Diſappointment of all will be, that they will find the moſt perfect Accompliſhment of their Wiſhes, after a very ſmall Time, to be little or no Increaſe of their Happineſs. Perſons un-

[s] Prov. xxi. 25.

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eaſy in their preſent Situation, or intent on ſome darling Object, imagine that could they but ſucceed in ſuch a Purſuit, or had they but ſuch a Perſon's good Fortune or Accompliſhments, then they ſhould be perfectly at Eaſe, and laſtingly delighted. But they utterly miſtake. Every Enjoyment palls and deadens quickly: every Condition hath its unſeen Inconveniences and Sufferings, as well as its viſible Advantages. And Happineſs depends ſcarce at all on the Preeminence commonly admired. For the Noble, the Powerful, the Rich, the Learned, the Ingenious, the Beautiful, the Gay, the Voluptuous, are uſually to the full as far from it, and by Turns own they are, as any of the Wretches, whom they ſeverally deſpiſe. Indeed, when every Thing is tried round, we ſhall experience at laſt, what we had much better ſee at firſt, as we eaſily may, that the cheerful Compoſure of a reaſonable and religious, and therefore contented, Mind, is the only ſolid Felicity that this World affords; the great Bleſſing of Heaven here below; that will enable us to reliſh the reſt, if we have them; and to be

ſatisfied,

ſatisfied, if we have them not. What *Solomon* hath ſaid of Wealth, he found to be equally true of every Thing elſe beneath the Sun. *God giveth to a Man, that is good in his Sight, Wiſdom, and Knowledge, and Joy: but to the Sinner he giveth Travel, to gather and heap up.—This alſo is Vanity, and Vexation of Spirit* [h].

Contentment therefore being the Gift of God, we ſhould earneſtly pray to Him for it. And in order to become fit Objects of his Favour, we ſhould frequently and thankfully recollect the many undeſerved Comforts of our Condition, that we may bear the Afflictions of it more patiently; reaſoning with *Job, Shall we receive Good at the Hand of God, and ſhall we not receive Evil* [i]? Nor ſhould we fail to join with our Meditations on his paſt and preſent Mercies, the firm Aſſurance, which both his Attributes and his Promiſes furniſh, that the ſame *loving Kindneſs ſhall follow us all the Days of our Life* [k]; and be exerted, though ſometimes for our Correction or Trial, yet always for our Benefit; and ſo as to make

[h] Eccl. ii. 26. [i] Job. ii. 10. [k] Pſalm xxiii. 6.

our

our Lot ſupportable in every Variety of outward Circumſtances. *Let your Converſation* therefore *be without Covetouſneſs; and be content with ſuch Things as ye have: for He hath ſaid, I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee*[1]. Another very important Conſideration, and neceſſary to be often brought to Mind, is, that the Seaſon both of enjoying the Advantages, and bearing the Inconveniences, of Life is ſhort: but the Reward of enjoying and bearing each, as we ought, is eternal and inconceivably great.

Together with theſe Reflections, let us exerciſe a ſteady Care to check every faulty Inclination in its earlieſt Riſe. For it is chiefly indulging them at firſt, that makes them ſo hard to conquer afterwards. And yet we ſhall always find the bad Conſequences of yielding to outweigh vaſtly the Trouble of reſiſting: and that to bring our Deſires, when they are the ſtrongeſt, down to our Condition, is a much eaſier Work, than to raiſe our Condition up to our Deſires, which will only grow the more ungovernable, the more they are pampered.

[1] Heb. xiii. 5.

Fur-

Further: whatever Share we poſſeſs of worldly Plenty, let us beſtow it on ourſelves with decent Moderation, and impart of it to others with prudent Liberality: for thus *knowing how to abound*, we ſhall *know* the better *how to ſuffer Need*[m], if Providence calls us to it. And laſtly, inſtead of *ſetting our Affections on* any *Things on Earth*[n], which would be a fatal Neglect of the great End, that we are made for, let us exalt our Views to that bleſſed Place, where *Godlineſs with Contentment will be* unſpeakable *Gain*[o]: and they who have reſtrained the inferior Principles of their Nature by the Rules of Religion, ſhall have the higheſt Faculties of their Souls *abundantly ſatisfied with the Fatneſs of God's Houſe, and be made to drink of the River of his Pleaſures*[p].

Thus then you ſee both the Meaning, and the Importance, of this laſt Commandment: which is indeed the Guard and Security of all the preceding ones. For our Actions will never be right habitually,

[m] Phil. iv. 12. [n] Col. iii. 2. [o] 1 Tim. vi. 6.
[p] Pſalm xxxvi. 8.

till

till our Deſires are ſo. Or if they could; our Maker demands the whole Man, as he ſurely well may: nor, till that is devoted to Him, are we *meet for the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*[q].

And now, both the firſt and the ſecond Table of the ten Commandments having been explained to you, it only remains, that we beg of God *ſufficient Grace*[r] to keep them; earneſtly entreating him in the Words of his Church: *Lord, have Mercy upon us, and write all theſe thy Laws in our Hearts, we beſeech thee.*

[q] Col. i. 12. [r] 2 Cor. xii. 9.

LECTURE XXIX.

Of Man's Inability, God's Grace, and Prayer to Him for it.

I Have now proceeded, in the Courſe of theſe Lectures, to the End of the Commandments; and explained the Nature of that Repentance, Faith and Obedience, which were promiſed for us in our Baptiſm, and which we are bound to exerciſe, in Proportion as we come to underſtand the Obligations incumbent on us. You cannot but ſee by this Time, that the Duties, which God injoins us, are not only very important, but very extenſive. And therefore a Conſideration will almoſt unavoidably preſent itſelf to your Minds in the next Place, what Abilities we have to perform them. Now this Queſtion our Catechiſm decides, without aſking it, by a Declaration, extremely diſcouraging in Ap-

pearance; that *we are not able, of ourſelves, to walk in the Commandments of God, and to ſerve him.*

Indeed, had we ever ſo great Abilities, we muſt have them, not of ourſelves, but of our Maker: from whom all the Powers of all Creatures are derived. But ſomething further than this, is plainly meant here: that there are no Powers, belonging to human Nature in its preſent State, ſufficient for ſo great a Purpoſe. *The Law* of God *is ſpiritual, but we are carnal, ſold under Sin*[a]. And that ſuch is our Condition, will appear by reflecting, firſt, what it was at our Birth; ſecondly, what we have made it ſince.

1. As to the firſt: we all give Proofs, greater or leſs, of an inbred Diſorder and Wrongneſs in our Underſtandings, Will, and Affections. Poſſibly one Proof, that ſome may give of it, may be a Backwardneſs to own it. But they little conſider, how ſevere a Sentence they would paſs, by denying it, on themſelves, and all Mankind. Even with our natural bad Incli-

[a] Rom. vii. 14.

nations for ſome Excuſe, we are blameable enough for the ill Things that we do. But how much more ſhould we be ſo, if we did them all, without the Solicitation of any inward Depravity to plead afterwards in our Favour? In Point of Intereſt therefore, as well as Truth, we are concerned to admit an original Proneneſs to Evil in our Frame: while yet Reaſon plainly teaches, at the ſame Time, that whatever God created was originally, in its Kind, perfect and good.

To reconcile theſe two Things would have been a great Difficulty, had not Revelation pointed out the Way, by informing us, that *Man* was indeed *made upright* [b], but that the very firſt of human Race loſt their Innocence and their Happineſs together; and tainting, by wilful Tranſgreſſion, their own Nature, tainted, by Conſequence, that of their whole Poſterity. Thus *by one Man, Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin; and ſo Death paſſed upon all Men, for that all have ſinned* [c]. We find in Fact, however difficult it may be to ac-

[b] Eccl. vii. 29. [c] Rom. v. 12.

count for it in Speculation, that the Diſpoſitions of Parents, both in Body and Mind, very commonly deſcend, in ſome Degree, to their Children. And therefore it is intirely credible, that ſo great a Change in the Minds of our firſt Parents from abſolute Rightneſs of Temper to preſumptuous Wickedneſs; accompanied with an equal Change of Body, from an immortal Condition to a mortal one, produced perhaps, in Part, by the phyſical Effects of the forbidden Fruit; that theſe Things, I ſay, ſhould derive their fatal Influences to every ſucceeding Generation. For though God will never impute any Thing to us, as our perſonal Fault, which is not our own Doing; yet he may very juſtly withhold from us thoſe Privileges, which he granted to our firſt Parents only on Condition of their faultleſs Obedience, and leave us ſubject to thoſe Inconveniences, which followed of Courſe from their Diſobedience: as, in Multitudes of other Caſes, we ſee Children in far worſe Circumſtances by the Faults of their diſtant Forefathers, than they otherwiſe would have been. And moſt evidently

it is no more a Hardſhip upon us, to become ſuch as we are by Means of *Adam*'s Tranſgreſſion, than to ſuffer what we often do for the Tranſgreſſions of our other Anceſtors; or to have been created ſuch as we are, without any one's Tranſgreſſion: which laſt, all, who diſbelieve original Sin, muſt affirm to be our Caſe.

But unhappy for us as the Failure of the firſt Man was, we ſhould be happy in Compariſon, if this were all, that we had to lament. Great as the native Diſorder of our Frame is; yet either the Fall of Adam left in it, or God reſtored to it, ſome Degree of Diſpoſition to Obedience, and of Strength againſt Sin: ſo that though *in us, that is in our Fleſh, dwelleth no good Thing* [d], yet *after the inward Man, (the Mind) we delight in the Law of God* [e]; and there are Occaſions, on which even *the Gentiles, which have not the Law, do by Nature the Things contained in the Law* [f], though neither all, nor any, without Fault. And on us Chriſtians our heavenly Father confers, in our Baptiſm, the Aſſurance of much greater

[d] Rom. vii. 18. [e] Ver. 22, 23. [f] Rom. ii. 14.

Strength to obey his Commands, than they have. But then, if we conſider

2. What we have made our Condition ſince, we ſhall find, that inſtead of uſing well the Abilities which we had, and taking the Methods, which our Maker hath appointed for the Increaſe of them, we have often careleſsly, and too often wilfully, miſemployed the former, and neglected the latter. Now by every Inſtance of ſuch Behaviour, we diſpleaſe God, weaken our right Affections, and add new Strength to wrong Paſſions: and by Habits of ſuch Behaviour, corrupting our Hearts, and blinding our Underſtandings, we bring ourſelves into a much worſe Condition, than that, in which we were born; and thus become doubly incapable of doing our Duty. This, Experience proves but too plainly; though Scripture did not teach, as it doth, that *the Imagination of Man's Heart is Evil from his Youth*[g]: that *we were ſhapen in Iniquity, and in Sin did our Mother conceive us*[h]: that *the carnal Mind is Enmity againſt God*[i]: that *without Chriſt we can do nothing*[k]; *and that*

[g] Gen. viii. 21. [h] Pſ. li. 5. [i] Rom. viii. 7. [k] John xv. 5.

we

we are not ſufficient to think any Thing, as of ourſelves[1].

Yet, notwithſtanding this, we feel within us an Obligation of Conſcience to do every Thing that is right and good. For that Obligation is in its Nature unchangeable: and we cannot be made happy otherwiſe, than by endeavouring to fulfil it; though God, for the Sake of our bleſſed Redeemer, will make fit Allowances for our coming ſhort of it. But then we muſt not hope for ſuch Allowances as would really be unfit. Our original Weakneſs indeed is not our Fault: but our Neglect of being relieved from it, and the Additions that we have made to it, are. And whatever we might have had the Power of doing, if we would; it is no Injuſtice to puniſh us for not doing: eſpecially when the Means of enabling ourſelves continue to be offered to us through our Lives. Now, in Fact, the whole Race of Mankind, I charitably hope and believe, have, by the general Grace or Favour of God, the Means of doing ſo much, at leaſt, as may exempt

[1] 2 Cor. iii. 5.

them

them from future Sufferings. But Chriſtians, by the *ſpecial Grace* mentioned in this Part of the Catechiſm, are qualified to do ſo much more, as will intitle them, not for their own Worthineſs, but that of the holy Jeſus, to a diſtinguiſhing Share of future Reward.

Now the ſpecial Grace of the Goſpel conſiſts, partly in the outward Revelation, which it makes to us, of divine Truths; partly in the inward Aſſiſtance, which it beſtows on us for obeying the divine Will. The latter is the Point, here to be conſidered.

That God is able, by ſecret Influences on our Minds, to diſpoſe us powerfully in Favour of what is Right, there can be no Doubt: for we are able in ſome Degree to influence one another thus. That there is Need of his doing it, we have all but too much Experience: and that therefore we may reaſonably hope for it, evidently follows. He interpoſes continually by his Providence, to carry on the Courſe of Nature in the material World: is it not then very likely, that he ſhould interpoſe in a Caſe,

Caſe, which, as far as we can judge, is yet more worthy of his Interpoſition; and incline and ſtrengthen his poor Creatures to become good and happy, by gracious Impreſſions on their Souls, as Occaſions require? But ſtill, Hope and Likelihood are not Certainty: and God, *whoſe Ways are paſt finding out* [m], might have left all Men to their own Strength, or rather indeed their own Weakneſs. But whatever he doth in Relation to others, which is not our Concern, he hath clearly promiſed to us Chriſtians, that *his Grace ſhall be ſufficient for us* [n]; his Holy Spirit ſhall enable us effectually to do every Thing which his Word requires.

We may *reſiſt* [o] his Motions: or we may receive them into our Souls, and act in Conſequence of them. Every one hath Power enough to do right: Scripture, as well as Reaſon, ſhews it: only we have it not reſident in us by Nature; but beſtowed on us continually by our Maker, as we want it. In all good Actions that we perform, *the Preparation of the Heart is from the*

[m] Rom. xi. 33. [n] 2 Cor. xii. 9. [o] Acts vii. 51.

Lord.

Lord[p]. And that *Faith*, which is the Fountain of all Actions truly good, *is not of ourſelves, it is the Gift of God*[q]. But *he giveth liberally to all*[r], who aſk him; and therefore no one hath Cauſe of Complaint.

It is true, we are ſeldom able to diſtinguiſh this heavenly Influence from the natural Workings of our own Minds: as indeed we are often influenced one by another without perceiving it. But the Aſſurance, given in Scripture, of its being vouchſafed to us, is abundantly ſufficient: to which, Experience alſo would add ſtrong Confirmation, did we but attend with due Seriouſneſs to what paſſes within our Breaſts.

Our natural Freedom of Will is no more impaired by theſe ſecret Admonitions of our Maker, than by the ſecret Perſuaſions of our Fellow-Creatures. And the Advantage of having God's Help, far from making it unneceſſary to help ourſelves, obliges us to it peculiarly. We are therefore to *work out our own Salvation*, becauſe *He worketh in us both to will and to do*[s]. For it is a great Aggravation of every Sin, that, in committing

[p] Prov. xvi. 1. [q] Eph. ii. 8. [r] James i. 5.
[s] Phil. ii. 12, 13.

it,

it, we *quench* the pious Motions excited by *the Spirit* [t] of God in our Hearts: and a great Incitement to our Endeavours of performing every Duty, that with ſuch Aid we may be ſure of Succeſs. Our own natural Strength cannot increaſe, as Temptations and Difficulties do: but that, which we receive from Heaven, can. And thus it is, that we learn Courage and Humility at once; by knowing, that *we can do all Things*, but only *through Chriſt which ſtrengtheneth us* [u]; and therefore *not we, but the Grace of God, which is with us* [w].

This Grace therefore being of ſuch Importance to us, our Catechiſm, with great Reaſon, directs us *at all Times to call for it by diligent Prayer*. For our heavenly Father hath not promiſed, nor can we hope, that He *will give the Holy Spirit to them who* proudly diſdain, or negligently omit, to *aſk Him* [x]. And hence, it becomes peculiarly neceſſary, that we ſhould underſtand how to pray to Him: a Duty mentioned in the former Part of the Catechiſm, but reſerved to be explained more fully in this.

[t] 1 Theſſ. v. 19. [u] Phil. iv. 13. [w] 1 Cor. xv. 10. [x] Luke xi. 13.

God

God having beſtowed on us the Knowledge, in ſome Meaſure, of what He is in Himſelf, and more eſpecially of what He is to us; we are doubtleſs bound to be ſuitably affected by it: and to keep alive in our Minds, with the utmoſt Care, due Sentiments of our continual Dependance on Him, of Reverence and Submiſſion to his Will, of Love and Gratitude for his Goodneſs, of Humility and Sorrow for all our Sins againſt Him; and earneſt Deſire, that his Mercy and Favour may be ſhewn, in ſuch Manner as He ſhall think fit, to us and to all our Fellow-Creatures.

Now, if theſe Sentiments ought to be felt, they ought alſo to be ſome Way expreſſed: not only that others may ſee we have them, and be excited to them by our Example; but that we ourſelves may receive both the Comfort and the Improvement, which muſt naturally flow from exerciſing ſuch valuable Affections. And unqueſtionably the moſt lively and moſt reſpectful Manner of exerciſing them is, that we direct them to Him who is the Object of them; and pour out our Hearts before Him in ſuitable

able Acts of Homage, Thankſgiving, and Confeſſion; in humble Petitions for ourſelves, and Interceſſions for all Mankind. Not that God is ignorant, till we inform Him, either of our outward Circumſtances, or the inward Temper of our Hearts. If He were, our Prayers would give Him but very imperfect Knowledge of either: for we are greatly ignorant of both ourſelves. But the Deſign of Prayer is, to bring our own Minds into a right Frame; and ſo make ourſelves fit for thoſe Bleſſings, for which we are very unfit, while we are too vain or too careleſs to aſk them of God.

The very Act of Prayer therefore will do us good, if we pray with Attention, elſe it is nothing; and with Sincerity, elſe it is worſe than nothing. And the Conſequences of praying, God hath promiſed, ſhall be further Good. *All Things whatſoever ye ſhall aſk in Prayer, believing, ye ſhall receive*[y]. Not abſolutely *all Things whatſoever* we deſire: for ſome of our Deſires may be on ſeveral Accounts unfit, and ſome would prove extremely hurtful to us. Therefore

[y] Matth. xxi. 22.

we

we ought to conſider well what we pray for: and eſpecially in all temporal Matters refer ourſelves wholly to God's good Pleaſure. Nor doth he always grant immediately what He deſigns to grant, and hath given us the fulleſt Right to aſk: but delays it perhaps a while to exerciſe our Patience and Truſt in Him: for which Reaſon our Saviour directs us *always to pray, and not to faint*[z]. But whatever is really good, He will undoubtedly, as ſoon as it is really neceſſary, give us upon our Requeſt: provided further, that with our earneſt Petitions, we join our honeſt Endeavours: for Prayer was never deſigned to ſerve inſtead of Diligence, but to aſſiſt it. And therefore, if, in our temporal Affairs, we are idle or inconſiderate, we muſt not expect that our Prayers will bring us good Succeſs: and if, in our ſpiritual ones, we wilfully or thoughtleſsly neglect ourſelves; we muſt not imagine, that God will amend us againſt our Wills, or whilſt we continue ſupinely indifferent. But let us do our Duty to the beſt of our Power, at the ſame Time that

[z] Luke xviii. 1.

we pray for his Bleſſing; and we may be aſſured, that nothing but an injurious Diſbelief can prevent our obtaining it: on which Account St. *James* requires, that we *aſk in Faith, nothing wavering*[a].

Indeed without the Encouragement given us in Scripture, it might well be with ſome Diffidence, and it ſhould ſtill be with the utmoſt Reverence, that *we take upon us to ſpeak unto the Lord, who are but Duſt and Aſhes*[b]. The Heathens therefore addreſſed their Prayers to imaginary Deities of an inferior Rank, as judging themſelves unworthy to approach the ſupreme One. But our Rule is, *Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and Him only ſhalt thou ſerve*[c]. The affected *Humility of worſhipping* even *Angels*, and therefore much more Saints, (who, if really ſuch, are yet *lower than Angels*[d]) may, as we are taught, *beguile us of our Reward*[e]: whereas we may *come boldly to the Throne of* our Maker's *Grace*[f], though not in our own Right, yet through the Mediator whom he hath appointed: and

[a] Jam. i. 6. [b] Gen. xviii. 27. [c] Matth. iv. 10.
[d] Pſ. viii. 5. [e] Col. ii. 18. [f] Heb. iv. 16.

who hath both procured us the Privilege; and inſtructed us how to uſe it, by delivering to us a Prayer of his own Compoſition; which might be at once a Form for us frequently to repeat, and a Pattern for us always to imitate.

That the Lord's Prayer was deſigned as a Form, appears from his own Words: *After this Manner pray ye*; or, tranſlating more literally, *Thus pray ye*[g]; and, which is yet more expreſs, *When ye pray, ſay, Our Father*[h], &c. Beſides it was given by Him to his Diſciples on their Requeſt, that He would *teach them to pray, as John alſo taught his Diſciples*[i]: which undoubtedly was, as the great Rabbies amongſt the *Jews* commonly taught theirs, by a Form. And accordingly this Prayer hath been conſidered and uſed as ſuch, from the earlieſt Ages of Chriſtianity down to the preſent.

Yet our Saviour's Deſign was not, that this ſhould be the only Prayer of Chriſtians: as appears both from the Precepts and the Practice of the Apoſtles, as well as from the Nature and Reaſon of the Thing. But

[g] Matth. vi. 9. [h] Luke xi. 2. [i] Ver. 1.

when it is not uſed as a Form, it is however of unſpeakable Advantage as a Model. He propoſes it indeed more particularly as an Example of Shortneſs. Not that we are never to make longer Prayers: for He himſelf *continued all Night in Prayer to God* [k]: and we have a much longer, made by the Apoſtles, in the fourth Chapter of the Acts. But his Intention was, to teach by this Inſtance, that we are not to affect unmeaning Repetitions, or any needleſs Multiplicity of Words, as if we *thought that we ſhould be heard for our much ſpeaking* [l]. And not only in this Reſpect, but every other, is our Lord's Prayer an admirable Inſtitution and Direction for praying aright: as will abundantly appear, when the ſeveral Parts of it come to be diſtinctly explained. But tho' ſuch Explanation will ſhew, both the Purport and the Excellency of it, more fully; yet they are to every Eye viſible in the main, without any Explanation at all. And therefore let us conclude at preſent with devoutly offering it up to God.

[k] Luke vi. 12. [l] Matth. vi. 7.

Our Father, which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this Day our daily Bread. And forgive us our Treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us. And lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil. For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

LECTURE XXX.

The LORD's PRAYER.

Our Father, which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name.

THE Prayer, which our bleſſed Saviour taught his Diſciples, doth not need to be explained, as being, in itſelf, and originally, obſcure. For no Words could be more intelligible to his Apoſtles, than all thoſe, which he hath uſed throughout it. And even to Us now, there is nothing that deſerves the Name of difficult; notwithſtanding the Diſtance of Time, the Change of Circumſtances, and the different Nature and Turn of the Jewiſh Tongue from our own. But ſtill, in order to apprehend it ſufficiently, there is requiſite

ſome Knowledge of Religion, and the Language of Religion. Beſides, as we all learnt it when we were young, whilſt we had but little Underſtanding, and leſs Attention; it is not impoſſible, but ſome of us may have gone on repeating it to an advanced Age, without conſidering it near ſo carefully, as we ought. And this very Thing, that the Words are ſo familiar to us, may have been the main Occaſion, that we have ſcarce ever thought of their Import. Now we are ſenſible, it would be a great Unhappineſs to have our Devotions, as the Church of *Rome* have the principal Part of theirs, in a Language that we could not underſtand. But ſurely it is as great a Fault, if, when we may ſo eaſily underſtand them, we do not; or if, though we do underſtand them, when we think of the Matter, we think about it ſo little, that, as to all good Purpoſes, it is much the ſame with praying in an unknown Tongue. The Lord's Prayer, in itſelf, is very clear, very expreſſive, very comprehenſive. But all this is nothing to us, if we ſay it without knowing, or without minding, what we ſay. For how excellent Words ſoever we uſe;

if

if we add no Meaning to them, this can be no praying. And therefore, to make it really beneficial to us, we muſt fix deeply in our Thoughts what it was intended by its Author to contain.

Now it conſiſts, you may obſerve, of three Parts. I. An Invocation, or calling upon God. II. Petitions offered. III. Praiſes aſcribed to Him.

The Invocation is in theſe Words, *Our Father, which art in Heaven.* And, few as they are, they expreſs very fully the Grounds on which Divine Worſhip ſtands.

As the whole World derives its Being from God, He is on that Account ſtiled, *the Father of all* [a]. But as rational Creatures are produced, not only by Him, but in his Image and Likeneſs, He is in a ſtricter Senſe the Father of theſe. And therefore Angels and Men are called in Scripture, what the Animals beneath them never are, *the Sons* [b], and the *Offspring of God* [c]: in which Senſe the Prophet ſaith, *O Lord, thou art our Father, and we are all*

[a] Eph. iv. 6. [b] Job i. 6. ii. 1. xxxviii. 7. [c] Acts xvii. 29.

the Work of thy Hand[d]. Now, as our Creator, he is evidently not only our Father, but alſo our ſovereign Lord.

A ſecond Title God hath to this Name, from that fatherly Providence and Goodneſs, which he exerciſes every where continually: and of which Mankind hath large Experience; not only in the many Enjoyments, Comforts, and Deliverances, that He grants us, but even in the Afflictions which He ſends us, always for our Benefit; then more eſpecially *dealing with us as with Children, whom he loveth*[e].

But there is yet a third Reaſon, why we call Him *our Father*, peculiar to us as Chriſtians; and founded on our being united by Faith to his Son *our Head*[f], *and begotten again, through his Goſpel, to a lively Hope, to an Inheritance reſerved in Heaven for us*[g]: Privileges ſo invaluable, that though He is doubtleſs a Father, and a tender one, to our whole Species, yet his Word ſpeaks of Us, as the only Perſons, in Compariſon, that have a Right to conſider Him in this

[d] Iſa. lxiv. 8. [e] Heb. xii. 5, &c. [f] 1 Cor. xi. 3. Eph. i. 22. [g] 1 Cor. iv. 15. 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.

View. *As many as received Him*, that is our bleſſed Saviour, *to them gave He Power to become the Sons of God; even to them that believe on his Name*[h]. *The Lord is good to all*[i]: but ſingularly good to thoſe, who become, by the Influences of the Chriſtian Covenant, ſingularly fit Objects of his Goodneſs. They have Promiſes of the greateſt Bleſſings, to which nothing, but Promiſe, can intitle: Pardon of Sin, Aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit, and Life eternal; by which laſt they are made, in the happieſt Senſe, the *Children of God, being the Children of the Reſurrection*[k]. Let us learn then, as often as we ſay, *Our Father*, to magnify in our Souls, that gracious Redeemer, who hath made Him ſo to us, more than He is to others. Let us often repeat the thankful Reflection of St. *John*, *Behold what Manner of Love the Father hath beſtowed on us, that we ſhould be called the Sons of God*[l]: and joyfully argue as St. *Paul* doth, *If Children, then Heirs; Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with Chriſt*[m].

[h] John. i. 12. [i] Pſalm cxlv. 9. [k] Luke xx. 36.
[l] 1 John iii. 1. [m] Rom. viii. 17.

Thus

Thus then the Words, *Our Father*, expreſs, not only the abſolute Authority, but the unſpeakable Goodneſs of God: and the next, *which art in Heaven*, acknowledge his Glory and Power.

I have already obſerved to you, in explaining the ſixth Article of the Creed, that as God cannot but be, ſo he cannot but be every where: for there is nothing in any one Part of Space to confine his Preſence to that, rather than to any other. Beſides, his Providence is continually acting every where: and wherever He acts, He is. Therefore Solomon juſtly declares, *The Heaven, and Heaven of Heavens cannot contain thee*[n]. But ſtill the Scriptures repreſent Him as manifeſting the more viſible Tokens of his inexpreſſible Majeſty in one peculiar Place: where He receives the Homage of his holy Angels, and iſſues forth his Commands for the Government of the World. This they call his *Throne*[o], and *Tabernacle in Heaven*[p]: of which the earthly Tabernacle of *Moſes* was deſigned to be a Figure;

[n] 1 Kings viii. 27. 2 Chron. ii. 6. vi. 18. [o] Pſ. xi. 4.
[p] Heb. viii. 1, 2.

being

being directed to be *made according to the Pattern, ſhewed him in the Mount* [q]. That earthly Tabernacle was honoured for a long Time with ſplendid Marks of the Divine Reſidence: on which Account, even after they were withdrawn, the Jews would be apt to conſider God, as dwelling at *Jeruſalem* in his Temple, and *ſitting between the Cherubim* [r]. But our bleſſed Lord, being about to aboliſh the Moſaic Ordinances, enlarges the Views of his Diſciples, and raiſes them to that higher Habitation of inconceivable Glory, to which they ſhould hereafter be admitted; and on which they were in the mean while to ſet their Hearts, as the Seat of all Bleſſedneſs.

But further, being *in Heaven* denotes likewiſe the almighty Power of God: agreeably to that of the Pſalmiſt, *Our God is in the Heavens: He hath done whatſoever He pleaſed* [s]. For as a higher Situation gives a ſuperior Strength and Command; and accordingly in all Languages, being exalted or brought low, ſignifies an Increaſe or Leſſening of Dominion or In-

[q] Heb. viii. 5. [r] Pſalm xcix. 1. [s] Pſalm cxv. 3.

fluence:

fluence: ſo repreſenting God, as placed above all, is deſigned to expreſs, in the ſtrongeſt Manner, that *His Kingdom ruleth over all*[t].

When therefore we call upon *our Father which is* in Heaven, we profeſs to God our Belief, that He is the Author and Preſerver of the Univerſe, who governs all Things with paternal Care; but extends his Favours eſpecially to thoſe, who by imitating and obeying Him ſhew themſelves his true Children: and therefore moſt eſpecially to ſuch, as having acquired, by the Merits and Grace of his Son, the neareſt Relation and Reſemblance to Him, have thereby a Covenant-Right to an eternal Inheritance in that bleſſed Place, where He exhibits his Glory, and reigns, poſſeſſed of ſovereign Authority, and boundleſs Power.

Now applying thus to God, under the Notion of *our Father*, is excellently fitted to remind us, both of the dutiful Regard, which we ought to have for him, as He himſelf pleads, *If I be a Father, where is*

[t] Pſalm ciii. 19.

mine

mine Honour[v]; and alſo, of the Kindneſs, which we may expect from him, according to our Saviour's Reaſoning, *If ye, being evil, know how to give good Gifts unto your Children; how much more ſhall your heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to them that aſk him*[w]? Nor is this Expreſſion leſs fitted to admoniſh us of copying the Goodneſs, which we adore; and exerciſing Mercy and Bounty towards all our Fellow-Creatures, as far as we can, *that we may be*, in this excellent Senſe, *the Children of our Father, which is in Heaven: for he maketh his Sun to riſe on the Evil and the Good; and ſendeth Rain on the Juſt and on the Unjuſt*[x]. And this Admonition is greatly ſtrengthened, as each of us is directed to addreſs himſelf to God, not as to his own Father merely, but as to *our Father*, the common Parent of Mankind. For there is inexpreſſible Force in that Argument, *Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherouſly*, or in any Reſpect unjuſtly or unkindly, *every Man againſt his*

[v] Mal. i. 6. [w] Luke xi. 13. [x] Matth. v. 45.

Brother?

Brother[x]? And yet with greater Force ſtill doth it hold, to prevent mutual Injuries or Unkindneſſes amongſt Chriſtians: who being, in a much cloſer and more endearing Senſe, Children of God, and Brethren one to another, than the reſt of the World; ſurely ought never to be, what they are too often, remarkably deficient in that reciprocal Affection, which was intended as the Token, whereby *all Men ſhould know them*[z].

Then, at the ſame Time, the Conſideration, that this *our Father is in Heaven*, poſſeſſed of infinite Power and Glory, tends greatly to inſpire us with Reverence towards him, at all Times, and in all Places, but in our Devotions peculiarly. And to this End it is pleaded by the wiſe King. *Keep thy Foot, when thou goeſt to the Houſe of God; be not raſh with thy Mouth, and let not thine Heart be haſty to utter any Thing before God; for God is in Heaven, and thou upon Earth*[a]. It alſo tends no leſs to remind us, what the great End of our Prayers and our Lives ſhould be: to obtain Admit-

[x] Mal. ii. 10. [z] John xiii. 35. [a] Eccl. v. 1, 2.

tance

tance into that bleſſed Place, *where* God is, and *Chriſt ſits on his right Hand*[b]. *For in his Preſence is the Fulneſs of Joy; and at his right Hand, there is Pleaſure for evermore*[c].

You ſee then, how many important Truths and Admonitions theſe few Words, which begin the Lord's Prayer, include: every Thing indeed, which can encourage us to pray, or diſpoſe us to pray as we ought.

The Petition, which immediately follows, *Hallowed be thy Name*, is perhaps more liable to be repeated without being underſtood, than any of the reſt: but when underſtood, as it eaſily may be, appears highly proper to ſtand in the very firſt Part of a Chriſtian's Prayer. The Name of God means here God himſelf, his Perſon and Attributes: as it doth in many other Places of Scripture, where *fearing* or *bleſſing*, or *calling upon the Name of the Lord* is mentioned. And to *hallow his Name* ſignifies, to think of him as a Holy Being, and behave towards him accordingly. Now the Word, *Holy*, hath been already more

[b] Col. iii. 1. [c] Pſalm xvi. 11.

than

than once, in the Courſe of theſe Lectures, explained to mean whatever is worthy of being diſtinguiſhed with ſerious Reſpect. And therefore all ſuch Perſons, Places, Things, and Times, as are ſet apart from vulgar Uſes, and devoted to religious ones, are ſaid in Scripture to be holy, and commanded to be hallowed. Now theſe being generally preſerved with great Care, as they always ought, from whatever may defile and pollute them; hence the Term, *Holy*, came to ſignify what is clean and pure. And the moſt valuable Purity, beyond Compariſon, being that of a Mind untainted by Sin, and ſecure from Tendencies towards it; Holineſs more eſpecially denotes this; and may in various Degrees be aſcribed to Men and Angels; but in abſolute Perfection to none, but God. For He, and He alone, is infinitely removed from all Poſſibility of doing, or thinking, or approving Evil.

This then is the Senſe, in which we are to acknowledge, that *holy and reverend is his Name*[d]: this Conception of him is the Man-

[d] Pſalm cxi. 9.

ner,

ner, in which we are to *hallow* it, and *sanctify the Lord God in our Hearts*[e]: a Matter of unſpeakable Importance, and the very Foundation of all true Religion. For if we are not fully perſuaded, that He is *of purer Eyes than to behold Evil*[f] with Indifference; if we imagine, that He can ever act unrighteouſly himſelf, or allow others to do ſo; that He is in any Caſe the Author of Sin; or eſteems and loves any Thing in his Creatures, but Uprightneſs and Goodneſs; or ſhews himſelf to be other, than a perfectly great, and wiſe, and juſt, and gracious Being: ſo far as we do this, we miſtake his Nature, and diſhonour him; and ſet up an Idol of our own Fancy, inſtead of the true God. The Conſequence of which will be, that in Proportion as our Notions of Him are falſe, our Worſhip, Imitation, and Obedience will be erroneous alſo; our Piety and our Morals will both be corrupted; we ſhall neglect what alone can recommend us to Him; we ſhall hope to pleaſe Him by Performances of no Value,

[e] 1 Pet iii. 15. [f] Hab. i. 13.

perhaps by wicked Deeds; and *the Light, that is in us, will* become *Darkneſs* [g].

No Wonder then, if we are directed to make it our firſt Petition, that we and all Men may *hallow God's Name*, as we ought: that ſo right a Senſe of his Nature and Attributes, eſpecially his Wiſdom, Juſtice, and Goodneſs, may prevail through the World, as may baniſh at once both Profaneneſs and Superſtition, and engage us all to fear and love him equally: that we may entertain ſuch Notions of Chriſtianity, as will promote its Honour; and allow ourſelves in nothing, that may bring Diſgrace upon it, or tempt any to *blaſpheme*, inſtead of ſanctifying, *that worthy Name, by which we are called* [h]: but that each of us, in our Stations, may, with all Diligence, and all Prudence, propagate the Belief of *pure Religion and undefiled before God and the Father* [i]. This is the Way, and the only Way poſſible, for us truly to honour Him, and be truly good and happy: happy in ourſelves, and in each other; in the preſent World, and that which is to come. With this Pe-

[g] Matth. vi. 23. [h] James ii. 7. [i] James i. 27.

tition

tition therefore our bleſſed Lord moſt rationally directs us to begin. And let us all remember, that what He bids us pray for in the firſt Place, He will expect that we ſhould endeavour after in the firſt Place; and as we acknowledge *Him, who hath called us, to be holy*, that we ſhould *be holy* alſo *in all Manner of Converſation* [k].

[k] 1 Pet. i. 15.

LECTURE XXXI.

Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done.

THE ſecond Petition of the Lord's Prayer, *Thy Kingdom come*, follows very naturally after the firſt, *Hallowed be thy Name*. For hallowing the Name of God, that is, entertaining juſt Notions, and being poſſeſſed with a deep Senſe, of the Holineſs of his Nature, his Abhorrence of Sin, his Juſtice and Goodneſs; is the neceſſary Preparative for ſubmitting to, and being faithful Subjects of, that Kingdom, for the coming of which we are directed to pray.

God indeed is, ever was, and cannot but be, Lord and King of the whole World, poſſeſſed of all Right and all Dominion, over all Things: as the plaineſt Reaſon ſhews, and the Concluſion of this very Prayer, in Conformity to the reſt of Scrip-

ture, acknowledges. In this Senſe therefore we cannot pray for his Kingdom, as ſomething future, but only rejoice in its being actually preſent: for what can be greater Joy, than to live under the Government of infinite Mercy, Wiſdom, and Power? *The Lord reigneth: let the Earth rejoice, let the Multitude of Iſles be glad thereof*[a].

But beſides this natural Kingdom of God, there is a moral and ſpiritual one, founded on the willing Obedience of reaſonable Creatures to thoſe Laws of Righteouſneſs, which he hath given them. Now this, we have too plain Evidence, is not yet come amongſt Men, ſo fully as it ought. The very firſt of human Race revolted from their Maker; and their Deſcendants, as both Scripture and other Hiſtory ſhews, grew, Age after Age, yet more and more diſobedient; till at length the Inhabitants of the whole Earth, inſtead of being the happy Subjects of God's rightful Empire, became, by immoral Lives, and idolatrous Worſhip, moſt wretched Slaves

[a] Pſalm xcvii. 1.

to the uſurped Dominion of the wicked one. The Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God made immediate Proviſion, through his only Son our Lord, to oppoſe this Kingdom of Darkneſs, as ſoon as it appeared in the World: not by his abſolute Power; for Obedience loſes its Value, unleſs it proceed from Choice; but by the rational Method of Inſtructions, Promiſes, and Warnings from Heaven, ſuperadded to what Nature taught, and ſuited to the Circumſtances of every Age.

Theſe he gave at firſt by the Patriarchs to all Men promiſcuouſly: and whoever acknowledged his Authority, and obeyed his Laws, was a good Subject and true Member of his Kingdom. But when afterwards, notwithſtanding this Care, the Corruption of Mankind was become general, He choſe the Poſterity of his Servant *Abraham*, and diſtinguiſhed them by his eſpecial Favour: not as caſting off the reſt of the World; for *in every Nation*, at all Times, *they that fear God, and work Righteouſneſs, are accepted with him*[b]: but that, in this

[b] Acts x. 35.

People at leaſt, the Profeſſion of Faith in Him, and Subjection to Him, might be kept alive; not merely for their own Benefit, but the Information of others alſo. With them therefore was the Kingdom of God, in a peculiar Degree, for 1500 Years. While they flouriſhed in their own Land, they held forth the Light of Truth to all the Nations round them. And when they were led captive or diſperſed into other Lands, they ſpread it yet farther: and thus were great Inſtruments in preparing the reſt of Mankind for that general Re-eſtabliſhment of Obedience to the true God, as King and Lord of all, which our bleſſed Saviour came to effect.

The Goſpel Diſpenſation therefore having this for its End, and being much more perfectly fitted to attain it, than any preceding Manifeſtation of Religion had been; the Scripture, in a diſtinguiſhed Manner, calls it *the Kingdom of God*, or *of Heaven:* both which Words denote, in exactly the ſame View, that Dominion, which in *Daniel* it is foretold *the God of Heaven ſhould ſet up, and which ſhould never be*

deſtroyed[c]. Our Saviour was then, after *John* the Baptiſt, only giving Notice of its Approach, and opening the Way for ſetting it up, when he firſt directed his Diſciples to pray, that it might come. By his Death He raiſed it on the Ruins of the Devil's Uſurpation, *over whom He triumphed on his Croſs*[d]: and now it hath been many Ages in the World. But ſtill it is by no Means come, in that Extent, and to that good Effect, which we have Reaſon to beg that it may, and to believe that it will. The largeſt Part of Mankind hath not, ſo much as in Profeſſion, entered into this Kingdom: but lies overwhelmed in Pagan Idolatry, Jewiſh Unbelief, or Mahometan Deluſion. The largeſt Part of Chriſtians have corrupted the Doctrine of Chriſt with grievous Errors: and thoſe who preſerve the pureſt Faith, too generally live ſuch impure and wicked Lives; that, though the Kingdom of God hath indeed taken Place amongſt them in outward Appearance, yet in that Senſe, which will prove at laſt the only important one,

[c] Dan. ii. 44. [d] Col. ii. 15.

they

they are ſtill far from it. *For the Kingdom of God*, ſaith our Saviour, *is within you*[e]: and conſiſts, as the Apoſtle further explains it, *in Righteouſneſs, and Peace, and Joy in the* Graces of the *Holy Ghoſt*[f].

Here then is great Room, and great Need, for praying; that the *Heathen* may become *the Inheritance of* Chriſt, *and the uttermoſt Parts of the* Mahometan *World his Poſſeſſion*[g]: that the Jews, *from whom*, for their Unbelief, *the Kingdom of God hath been* ſo long *taken*[h] away, may be reſtored to a Share in it; as the Prophets, both of the Old and New Teſtament, have foretold they ſhall: and laſtly, *that all who profeſs and call themſelves Chriſtians, may* not only *be led into the Way of Truth*, but *hold the Faith in Unity of Spirit, in the Bond of Peace, and in Righteouſneſs of Life*[i]. How little Proſpect ſoever there may be at preſent of ſuch Happineſs as this, yet *we have a ſure Word of Prophecy*[k], for the Ground of our Prayers, that the Time ſhall come, when *the Kingdoms of this World ſhall be the*

[e] Luke xvii. 21. [f] Rom. xiv. 17. [g] Pſalm ii. 8.
[h] Matth. xxi. 43. [i] Prayer for all Conditions of Men.
[k] 2 Pet. i. 19.

King-

Kingdoms of our God and of his Chriſt[l], in a Degree that they have never been yet: when *all the People ſhall be righteous*[m], and *know the Lord, from the greateſt unto the leaſt*[n].

But the Kingdom of God upon Earth, even in its beſt Eſtate, is comparatively but ſhort-lived and imperfect, indeed a mere Introduction to that glorious and eternal Manifeſtation of it in Heaven, which ought ever to be the Object of our moſt ardent Deſires and Requeſts. For as the Governor, and the Governed, and the great fundamental Laws of Government, are ſtill to be the ſame, in the preſent State of Trial, and the future one of Recompence; they both make up together but one Kingdom of God. And therefore, when we pray for the coming of it, we pray, in the laſt Place, for the Arrival of that Time, when the King and Judge of all *ſhall ſit upon the Throne of his Glory*[o], and *reward every Man according to his Works*[p]; when *the Righteous ſhall ſhine forth, as the Sun, in the Kingdom of their*

[l] Rev. xi. 15. [m] Iſa. lx. 21. [n] Jer. xxxi. 34.
[o] Matth. xxv. 31. [p] Matth. xvi. 27.

Father;

Father[q]; even that *Kingdom, which was prepared for them from the Foundation of the World*[r]; and *ſhall reign with Him* in it *for ever and ever*[s].

But then, as we pray for this Time, we muſt prepare for it alſo: elſe we do nothing but aſk our own Condemnation; as the Prophet *Amos* hath moſt awfully warned us: *Wo unto you that deſire the Day of the Lord. To what End is it for you? The Day of the Lord is Darkneſs, and not Light*[t].

To inſtruct us therefore, on what it is, that our Share in the Kingdom of God depends, our Saviour immediately ſubjoins another Petition, expreſſing it very clearly: *Thy Will be done in Earth as it is in Heaven.* For *not every one that ſaith unto Him, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*[u]: but they only who *do the Will of God, ſhall receive his Promiſe*[w].

Indeed what God *wills* to do Himſelf, that *He doth accordingly*, both *in the Army of Heaven, and amongſt the Inhabitants of the Earth; and none can ſtay his Hand*[x]. But

[q] Matth. xiii. 43. [r] Matth. xxv. 34. [s] Rev. xx. 6. xxii. 5. [t] Amos v. 18. [u] Matth. vii. 21. [w] Heb. x. 36. [x] Dan. iv. 35.

what

what He wills Us to do, that He only requires of us, as we value his Favour, or fear his Diſpleaſure; leaving us deſignedly that Power of not doing what he bids us, without which, doing it were no Virtue. But though Diſobedience to his Will is in our Power; yet Obedience is not ſo, without the Aſſiſtance of his Grace: which therefore, in theſe Words, we deſire for ourſelves, and for all Men. And ſince, by the Means of Prayer, we may have Strength to obey his Will granted us; we are certainly, with as much Juſtice, expected to obey it, as if we had the Power already of our own.

Now the Will of God conſiſts in theſe two Things: that we ſuffer patiently what He lays upon us, and perform faithfully what he commands us. The former of theſe; to bear with Reſignation whatever, in any Kind, God ſees proper to inflict; and, though we may wiſh and pray for the Prevention or Removal of Sufferings, yet to be content, nay deſirous, that *his Will* ſhould *be done, not ours*[y]; may often prove a

[y] Luke xxii. 42.

difficult,

difficult, but is always an evident and neceſſary, Duty. For to indulge a contrary Diſpoſition, is to ſet up ourſelves above our Maker; to rebel againſt his Authority, deny his Wiſdom, and diſtruſt his Goodneſs. The Ability therefore of ſubmitting meekly to his Pleaſure, is undoubtedly one great Thing that we are to requeſt, and endeavour to obtain.

But ſtill, as the bleſſed Inhabitants of Heaven ſurely have little or no Occaſion for this Kind of Obedience, we have Reaſon to think that the other, the active Sort, is the Point which our Saviour deſigned we ſhould principally have in View, when we beg, that God's Will may be done by us, as it is by them: by *his Angels, that fulfil his Commandments, hearkening unto the Voice of his Words; thoſe Miniſters of his, that do his Pleaſure*[z]. Not that we can hope to equal the Services of Beings placed ſo much above us: but only aſpire to ſuch Reſemblance of them, that our Obedience may bear the ſame Proportion to our Abilities, which that of the heavenly Spirits doth to theirs.

[z] Pſ. ciii. 20, 21.

Their

Their Knowledge of God's Will is clear and diſtinct: on which Account, the higheſt Character given of human Wiſdom is, to be *as an Angel of God, to diſcern Good and Bad*[a]. It ſhould therefore, when we make Uſe of this Petition, be our Deſire, that We alſo, in our Degree, may *be not unwiſe, but underſtanding what the Will of the Lord is*[b], and *may abound, more and more, in Knowledge and all Judgment*[c]. They do every Thing, without Exception, which they know to be God's Pleaſure: whereas we are very apt to omit Part, and perform the reſt but imperfectly. They do it with Alacrity and Chearfulneſs: whereas we too often ſhew great Backwardneſs and Reluctance. They do it alſo from a real Principle of Duty: whereas, were the Truth but known, as to God it is known, a great Share of the good Actions, upon which we value ourſelves, are perhaps only good Appearances; proceeding, ſome from Conſtitution, ſome from worldly Prudence, ſome from Vanity; few, it may be doubted, principally, and fewer yet, entirely, from the Love

[a] 2 Sam. xiv. 17. [b] Eph. v. 17. [c] Phil. i. 9.

or

or Fear of God, from Eſteem of Virtue, or Hatred of Sin. In theſe Reſpects then we muſt earneſtly pray, and diligently endeavour, to be like the holy Angels: and were we but like them in one Thing more; that they all, without Exception, do the Will of God, and have none amongſt them diſobedient to it; then would our Earth reſemble Heaven indeed. How far this is from being the Caſe, we know too well. But notwithſtanding let us comfort ourſelves with conſidering, that as the Time was, when even theſe bleſſed Spirits had a Mixture of evil ones amongſt them; ſo the Time will be, when we ſhall have no ſuch Mixture amongſt us: but ſhall become, in this and all Reſpects, *as the Angels of God in Heaven* [d].

[d] Matth. xxii. 30.

LECTURE XXXII.

Give us this Day our daily Bread: And forgive us our Treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us.

THE three former of the ſix Petitions of the Lord's Prayer expreſs our earneſt Deſires, that we, and all our Fellow-Creatures, may attain the great End of our Creation, that is, may underſtand, receive, and practiſe, true Religion, to God's Honour and our own eternal Happineſs: after which we proceed, in the three laſt, to aſk of Him the Means to this End; ſuch Supplies of our Wants, as will be needful for the Performance of our Duties. And they are comprehended under three Heads more: the Relief of our temporal Neceſſities, the Forgiveneſs of our paſt Sins, and the Aſſiſtance of his Grace againſt future Temptations.

The first of these Blessings we request, by saying, *Give us this Day our daily Bread.* All the good Things of Life, and all our Capacity of receiving Support and Comfort from them, proceed, as every Thing doth, from God's free Gift; and therefore depend, as every Thing doth, on his free Pleasure: for what He hath bestowed, He can, with just the same Ease, at any Time, take away. He hath placed Things indeed in a regular, and what we call a natural, Course and Order. But this Order is not only of his own appointing, but his own preserving too. *He* it is, that *maketh his Sun to rise*[a]; that *giveth us Rain from Heaven, and fruitful Seasons, filling our Hearts with Food and Gladness*[b]. Were He only thus kind to us all in general, it would certainly be our Duty to acknowledge his Kindness, and pray for the Continuance of it. But as we learn from Scripture further, that his Providence extends, even in the minutest Instances, to each of us in particular; and that not the smallest Thing comes to pass, but by his Appointment, or

[a] Matth. v. 45. [b] Acts xiv. 17.

wise

wiſe Permiſſion[c]; this furniſhes additional Reaſons for applying to Him, that his continual Superintendency may be ever exerciſed towards us for our Good. We know not indeed with Certainty, in theſe Matters, what will be good for us. But ſtill, ſince He hath given us Deſires, inſeparable from our Frame, of enjoying Life to its ordinary Term, with a competent Share of the ſeveral Accommodations which contribute to make it agreeable; it muſt be lawful to expreſs thoſe Deſires to Him in a proper Manner. And this our Saviour directs us how to do, when He bids us petition for *our daily Bread.*

The Word *Bread,* as it frequently ſignifies in Scripture all Sorts of Food, ſo it may very naturally ſignify, what it doth in this Prayer, all Sorts of Things requiſite in human Life. This *Agur* meant, when he prayed, that God would *feed him with Food* (in the original it is *Bread*) *convenient for him*[d]. And this we mean in common Diſcourſe, as often as we ſpeak of Perſons getting their *Bread.* But then it muſt by

[c] Matth. x. 29, 30. Luke xii. 6, 7. [d] Prov. xxx. 8.

no Means be extended beyond Things requiſite; thoſe, without which we are unable either to ſubſiſt at all, or however conveniently and comfortably. Not that Deſires of further Advantages in the World are univerſally unlawful. But they are ſo apt to enlarge, and ſwell into extravagant and ſinful Paſſions; into Schemes of Luxury, or Vanity, or Covetouſneſs; that we have uſually much more Need to reſtrain and check, than authorize them, by aſking the Accompliſhment of them from God; leſt we be guilty of what St. *James* condemns, *aſking amiſs, that we may conſume it upon our Luſts* [e].

It is therefore only for ſuch a Share of worldly Good, as to a reaſonable and moderate Mind will appear ſufficient, that our Saviour allows us here to pray; in the Spirit which *Agur*, in the Prayer juſt mentioned, expreſſes; *Give me neither Poverty nor Riches: feed me with Food convenient for me. Leſt I be full, and deny Thee, and ſay, Who is the Lord? or leſt I be poor, and ſteal, and take the Name of God in vain* [f]. For

[e] Jam. iv. 13. [f] Prov. xxx. 8, 9.

indeed, though the Temptations of extreme Poverty are very great; yet the Tendency of Wealth and Eaſe and Power, to Senſuality and Pride and Forgetfulneſs of God, is ſo exceeding ſtrong, that a well-inſtructed and conſiderate Mind would rather ſubmit, than chuſe to be placed in a Condition of Abundance and Eminence. For preſerving the Order, and conducting the Affairs of the World, ſome muſt be in ſuch Stations: but let all who are, look well to their Ways; and let none of their Inferiors envy them.

It ought to be further obſerved here, that our bleſſed Lord hath not only confined us to pray for *our Bread*, but *our daily Bread*; to be given us, as we aſk for it, Day by Day: intending, doubtleſs, to make us remember and acknowledge, that our Dependance on God is continual, from one Moment to another: that they, who have the moſt of this World, have it only during his Pleaſure; and are bound, both to aſk, and receive, every Day's Enjoyment of it, as a new Gift from Him: while, at the ſame Time, they who have leaſt may be aſſured,

that what He hath commanded them to pray for, He will ordinarily not fail to beſtow upon them; by bleſſing their Endeavours, if they are able to uſe Endeavours; or by ſtirring up the Charity of others towards them, if they are not.

For as to thoſe who can labour, Induſtry is the Method by which God hath thought fit to give them their Bread; and therefore, by which they ought to ſeek it. They have no Title to it any other Way; St. *Paul* having directed, *that, if any one will not work, neither ſhould he eat* [g]. Nor muſt they work only to ſupply their preſent Neceſſities: but, by Diligence and Frugality, lay up ſomething, if poſſible, for future Exigencies alſo: learning of *the Ant, which provideth her Meat in the Summer, and gathereth her Food in the Harveſt* [h].

So that applying for our daily Bread to God, is far from excluding a proper Care to uſe the appointed Means of procuring it for ourſelves. But if our Care be a preſumptuous one, and void of Regard to the Diſpoſer of all Things; we provoke Him

[g] 2 Theſſ. iii. 10. [h] Prov. vi. 8.

to

to blaſt our faireſt Hopes. And if it be an anxious and diſtruſtful one, we think injuriouſly of Him to whom we pray: who can as eaſily give us the Bread of To-morrow, as He gave us that of Yeſterday. Nay, if our worldly Cares, though they do not diſquiet our Minds, yet engroſs them; if we carry our Attention to this World ſo far as to forget the next; or imagine ourſelves to be ſecurer in Stores, *laid up for many Years*[i], than in God's good Providence: this alſo is very unſuitable to the Spirit, both of our Lord's Prayer, and of his whole Religion; which commands us to *ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs*[k], and *not to truſt in uncertain Riches, but in Him, who giveth us richly all Things to enjoy*[l].

I ſhall only add two Obſervations more, which have been made very juſtly on this Petition[m]: that, ſince we aſk our Bread from God, we ought not to accept it from the Devil; that is, to gain our Subſiſtence by any unlawful Means: and that, ſince we

[i] Luke xii. 19. [k] Matth. vi. 33. [l] 1 Tim. vi. 17.
[m] By Bp. Blackhall.

do not ſay, *Give me my daily Bread*; but, *Give us ours*; we entreat God to ſupply the Wants of others, as well as our own. Now the Means, which He hath provided for ſupplying the Wants of the helpleſs Poor, is the Charity of the Rich. And to pray Him, that they may be relieved, and yet withhold from them what He hath deſigned for their Relief, is juſt that Piece of Inconſiſtence or Hypocriſy, which St. *James* ſo ſtrongly expoſes. *If a Brother, or Siſter, be naked, and deſtitute of daily Food; and one of you ſay unto them, Depart in Peace, be ye warmed, and be ye filled; notwithſtanding ye give them not thoſe Things which are needful to the Body: what doth it profit*[n]?

From our temporal Wants, we proceed next to a much more important Concern, our ſpiritual ones: and here we aſk in the firſt Place, what it is very fit we ſhould, Pardon and Mercy. *Forgive us our Treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us.* The Forgiveneſs of Sins having been already explained, under that Article of the Creed, which relates to it; I ſhall only

[n] James ii. 15, 16.

take

take Notice at preſent of the Argument, which we are directed to uſe in pleading for it, which is likewiſe the eſpecial Condition of our obtaining it; that *we alſo forgive* [o], as we hope to be forgiven. And concerning this, two Things ought to be underſtood: what that Forgiveneſs is, to which we are bound; and how far the Exerciſe of it will avail us.

Now the Obligation to Forgiveneſs means, not that the Magiſtrate is to omit puniſhing Malefactors; *for he is the Miniſter of God, a Revenger, to execute Wrath upon him, that doth Evil* [p]: not that the Rulers of the Church are to forbear ſpiritual Cenſures againſt notorious Offenders; for the Scripture hath appointed them, for the Amendment of Sinners, and the Preſervation of the Innocent, when they are likely to have theſe good Effects: not that private Perſons do amiſs in bringing Tranſgreſſors to Juſtice; for neglecting it would be in general only a ſeeming Kindneſs to them, and a real Miſchief to human Society: not that we are forbidden to make rea-

[o] Luke xi, 4. [p] Rom. xiii. 4.

ſonable

ſonable Demands on ſuch, as withhold our Dues, or do us any Damage; for recovering a Debt is a very different Thing from revenging an Injury: nor laſtly, that we are always bound, when Perſons have behaved ill to us, either to think as well of them as before; which may be impoſſible; or to truſt and favour them as much; which may be unwiſe. But our Obligation to forgive doth mean, and abſolutely require, that civil Governors be moderate and merciful; and eccleſiaſtical ones make Uſe of Diſcipline *to Edification, not to Deſtruction*[q]: that, in our private Capacity, we paſs by all Offences, which, with Safety to ourſelves, and the Public, we can: that where we muſt puniſh, we do it with Reluctance; and as gently, as the Caſe will permit; and where we muſt defend or recover our Rights; we do it with the leaſt Expence, and the leaſt Uneaſineſs to the adverſe Party, that may be: that we never be guilty of Injuſtice to others, becauſe they have been guilty of it to us; and never refuſe them proper Favours, merely becauſe we have been refuſed

[q] 2 Cor. x. 8. xiii. 10.

ſuch

ſuch Favours by them; much leſs, becauſe we have not obtained from them what it was not fit we ſhould: that we look upon little Provocations, as Trifles: and be careful, not to think great ones greater than they are: that we be willing to make thoſe, who have diſpleaſed us, all ſuch Allowances to the full, as our common Frailty and Ignorance demand: that we always wiſh well to them; and be ready, as ſoon as ever we have real Cauſe, to think well of them; to believe their Repentance; and, how great or many ſoever their Faults may have been, to accept it; and reſtore them to as large a Share of our Kindneſs and Friendſhip, as any wiſe and good Perſon, unintereſted in the Queſtion, would think ſafe and right: always remembering, in every Caſe of Injury, how very apt we are to err on the ſevere Side; and how very much better it is, to err on the merciful one.

This is the Temper of Forgiveneſs to our Fellow-Creatures: and it is plainly a good and fit Temper. Let us therefore now conſider further, what Influence it will

have towards our Maker's forgiving us. Our Saviour undoubtedly lays a peculiar Streſs on it for this Purpoſe; both by inſerting it, as a Condition, into the Body of his Prayer; and inſiſting on it, as a neceſſary one, in his Words immediately after the Prayer. But ſtill, we muſt obſerve, He doth not mention it as the Cauſe, that procures our Forgiveneſs: for *God ſaveth us, not by* this, or any other *Works of Righteouſneſs, which we do, but according to his Mercy; which He hath ſhed on us abundantly through Jeſus Chriſt; that being juſtified by his Grace, we may be Heirs of eternal Life*[r]. Our pardoning others is no more than a Qualification, requiſite to our receiving that final Pardon from God, which our Saviour, through the Divine Goodneſs, hath merited by his Death, on that Condition. Nor is it the only Qualification neceſſary, though it be a principal one. For the reſt of God's Laws were given in vain, if obſerving this one would ſecure his Favour: and *Chriſt* would be found *the Miniſter of Sin*[s], if He had taught, that the ſingle good Diſpoſition of

[r] Tit. iii. 5, 6, 7. [s] Gal. ii. 17.

For-

Forgiveneſs would be ſufficient, let a Perſon have ever ſo many bad ones. But it is plain, that throughout the whole Sermon on the Mount, in which this Prayer is delivered, He makes the Performance of every Part of our Duty the Condition of our Acceptance. In the very Beginning of it, He hath promiſed Heaven to ſeveral other Virtues, as well as here to this; and the Meaning is, not that Perſons may get thither by any one, that they will; for nobody ſure is ſo bad, as to have none at all: but that each of them ſhall have its proper Share, in fitting us for that Mercy and Reward, which however, with leſs than all of them, we ſhall never obtain. Our Imperfections in all will indeed be pardoned: but not our Continuance in a wilful Neglect of any.

Still, though a Spirit of Forgiveneſs to our Brother is by no Means the Whole, that God requires in order to forgive Us; yet it is a Quality, often ſo difficult, always ſo important, and ſo peculiarly needful to be exerciſed by us, when we are intreating our Maker to exerciſe it towards us; that our Saviour had great Reaſon to place it in the ſtrong

ſtrong Light, which he hath done; and even to place it ſingle; ſince his Deſign could not eaſily be underſtood to be any other, than to engage our particular Attention to what deſerves it ſo much. For if we will not, for the Love of God, and in Obedience to his Command, pardon our Fellow-Creatures the few and ſmall Injuries, which they are able to do us; (when perhaps we may have done many Things to provoke them, and comparatively can have done little to oblige or ſerve them) how ſhould we ever expect, that He will forgive us the numerous and heinous Offences, which we have committed againſt Him; from whom we have received all that we have, on whom we depend for all that we can hope for, to whom therefore we owe the moſt unreſerved Duty, and the moſt affectionate Gratitude?

Let us remember then, that ſince we pray to be forgiven, only as we forgive; ſo often as we uſe theſe Words, we pray in Effect for God's Vengeance upon ourſelves, inſtead of his Mercy, if we forgive not. And therefore, let us apply to Him con-

continually for Grace to do in earneſt, what we profeſs to do in this Petition: let us carefully examine our Hearts and our Conduct, that we may not cheat ourſelves, for we cannot cheat God, with falſe Pretences of obſerving this Duty, while indeed we tranſgreſs it; let us utterly *put away from us, all Bitterneſs, and Wrath, and Clamour, and Evil-ſpeaking, with all Malice; and be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another; even as* we hope, that *God, for Chriſt's Sake, will forgive us* [t].

[t] Eph. iv. 31, 32.

LEC-

LECTURE XXXIII.

And lead us not into Temptation; but deliver us from Evil: for thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

WE ſhould be very unfit to aſk for the Pardon of our paſt Sins; and could neither hope to obtain it, nor indeed continue long the better for it; if we did not earneſtly deſire, at the ſame Time, to avoid Sin for the future. And therefore, after the Petition, *Forgive us our Treſpaſſes*, moſt properly follows, *and lead us not into Temptation.*

The Word *Temptation* very often ſignifies no more, than Trial; any Oppoſition or Difficulty, that may call forth our Virtues into vigorous Practice, and, by ſo doing, both ſtrengthen and make them known: not indeed to God, who always knows our Hearts; but to ourſelves and others;

to thoſe around us at preſent; to all Mankind, and the holy Angels hereafter. Now in this general Senſe, our whole Life on Earth is, and was intended to be, a State of Temptation: in which, as the Scripture expreſſes it, *God* himſelf *tempts* Men[a]; that is, proves and exerciſes them. And accordingly, St. *James* directs us to *count it all Joy, when we fall into divers Temptations*; adding a very good Reaſon for it: *Bleſſed is the Man, that endureth Temptation: for when he is tried, he ſhall receive the Crown of Life; which the Lord hath promiſed to them, that love Him*[b]. The more Love to God we thus ſhew; the more we exert our inward good Principles and Habits, and by exerting, improve them: the greater Reward we ſhall obtain. When therefore we ſay, *Lead us not into Temptation*; we do not pray, that we may not be tried at all: for we know, that we muſt, even for our own Good.

But the Word here ſtands for dangerous Trials, Provocations, and Enticements to Sin: under which we are likely to ſink,

[a] Gen. xxii. 1. Deut. iv. 34. 2 Chron. xxxii. 31.
[b] James i. 2, 12.

inſtead

inſtead of overcoming them. Now there is indeed ſcarce any Thing in Life, that may not be a Temptation to us, in this bad Senſe. Our Tempers, our Ages, our Stations, and Employments in the World, be they ever ſo different, may, each in their different Ways, riſk our Innocence. They that are poor, are grievouſly tempted, either to repine againſt God; or take unlawful Methods of relieving themſelves. And *they, that will be rich,* Experience, as well as the Apoſtle, may teach us, *fall into Temptation and a Snare, and into many fooliſh and hurtful Luſts* [c]. Both Adverſity and Proſperity, Buſineſs and Leiſure, Company and Solitude, have their reſpective Hazards. And ſometimes theſe Hazards are ſo dreadfully heightened by particular Circumſtances; and, at others, trying Incidents, totally unforeſeen, happen ſo unſeaſonably; that, though they may only rouſe and animate our Virtue; yet they may alſo, more probably, overbear, and deſtroy it. And therefore we muſt know very little of our natural Frailty, the Strength of our Paſſions,

[c] 1 Tim. vi. 9.

and *the Deceitfulneſs of Sin*[d]; if we do not think it the more prudent, as well as modeſter, Part, to decline, than venture the Conflict, if it be God's Will: and do not accordingly beg of Him, that He would *not lead us into* ſuch *Temptation.*

God, indeed, *tempts no Man*[e], in the Senſe of alluring and inviting him to Sin; as the Devil, and wicked People, and our own bad Hearts do. And therefore to pray, in this Senſe, that He would *not lead us into Temptation*, would be great Irreverence, inſtead of Piety: for it is inconſiſtent with the Holineſs of his Nature, that He ſhould. But as nothing comes to paſs, but with his Knowledge and Sufferance; and every Thing is ſubject to his Direction and Superintendency: the Scripture ſpeaks, as if every Thing was done by Him, when the Meaning, as appears by other Paſſages of it, is only to acknowledge, that nothing is done without Him: and, agreeably to the Manner of Speaking in the Eaſtern Countries, Things are aſcribed to Him, which He only permits, and afterwards turns to the

[d] Heb. iii. 13. [e] James i. 13.

Fur-

Furtherance of his own good Purpoſes. Now God may very juſtly permit us to be led into the ſevereſt Temptations, if we do not pray to Him againſt it: becauſe a great Part of the Danger proceeds from that Weakneſs, which we have wilfully, or careleſsly brought upon ourſelves; and Prayer is one of the Means, that He hath appointed for our Preſervation and Relief: which Means, if we uſe as we ought, He *will not ſuffer us to be tempted above that we are able; but will, with the Temptation, alſo make a Way to eſcape, that we may be able to bear it* [f].

But if, through Pride or Negligence, we will not aſk for his Help, we muſt not expect it. And though we do for Form's Sake aſk it, if we have little Faith in it, or Dependence on it, St. *James* hath foretold the Event: *Let not that Man think, that he ſhall receive any Thing of the Lord* [g]. Yet, on the other Hand, if we carry our Dependence ſo far, as preſumptuouſly to run into thoſe Dangers, out of which we beg Him to keep us; or, at leaſt, will do

[f] 1 Cor. x. 13. [g] James i. 7.

little or nothing to keep ourſelves out of them, inſtead of doing every Thing that we can; or if, in the Dangers, in which He may think fit to place us, we will not uſe our beſt Endeavours to ſtand, as well as pray that we may not fall; ſuch Prayers can never be likely to avail for our Protection. But fervent Devotion, hearty Reſolution, and prudent Care, united and continued, will do any Thing. By whatever Difficulties we are ſurrounded, and how little Poſſibility ſoever we may ſee of getting through them; ſtill, *Commit thy Way unto the Lord, put thy Truſt in Him, and He ſhall bring it to paſs* [h].

In the ſecond Part of this Petition, *But deliver us from Evil*; the Word *Evil* may ſignify, either Sin and its Conſequences; or the great Tempter to Sin, the *evil* or *wicked One*; for by that Name the Devil is often called in the New Teſtament [i]. The Number indeed of wicked Spirits is probably very great: but notwithſtanding this, being united, under one Head, in one De-

[h] Pſalm xxxvii. 5. [i] Matth. xiii. 19, 38. 1 John ii. 13, 14. iii. 12. v. 18.

ſign of obſtructing our Salvation, they are all comprehended under one Name. And ſince, in our preſent State of Trial, we have *not* only, as Experience ſhews, *Fleſh and Blood to wreſtle againſt*; our own bad Diſpoſition, and the Sollicitations of a bad World, to reſiſt; but alſo, as the Word of God informs us, *Principalities and Powers, and ſpiritual Wickedneſs in high Places*[k], an Army of inviſible Enemies, employing to overcome us, and not leſs formidably becauſe imperceptibly, all the Stratagems, that Heaven allows them to uſe; this, as it increaſes our Danger, may well quicken our Prayers for Safety and Deliverance. That there ſhould be evil Angels, as well as evil Men, of the greateſt Abilities and Accompliſhments, is, if rightly conſidered, no great Wonder: and that both ſhould entice us to Sin, is no reaſonable Diſcouragement: for let us but apply to God, and we ſhall not be left in the Power of either. What the Power of wicked Spirits is, we are not told in Scripture: and it is no Part of Religion, in the leaſt, to believe idle Stories

[k] Eph. vi. 11, 12.

about them. Of this we are ſure, that they have no Power, but what God permits: and He will never permit them to do, what ſhall prove, in the End, any Hurt to thoſe, who ſerve and fear Him. More eſpecially we are ſure, that they cannot in the leaſt, either force us into ſinning, or hinder us from repenting. Invite or diſſuade us they may, by ſuggeſting falſe Notions of the Pleaſure, or Profit, or Harmleſſneſs of Sin: by repreſenting God, as too good to be angry, or too ſevere to be reconciled: by deſcribing to our Imaginations, Repentance to be ſo eaſy at any Time, that it is needleſs now; or ſo difficult now, that it is too late and impoſſible: by putting it into our Thoughts, that we are ſo good, we may be confident and careleſs; or ſo wicked, we muſt abſolutely deſpair. It concerns us therefore greatly, *not to be ignorant of their Devices*[1]. But, provided we keep on our Guard; earneſtly apply to God, and are true to ourſelves; neither their Temptations, nor thoſe of the whole World, ſhall prevail againſt us. For then only, as St.

[1] 2 Cor. ii. 11.

James

James gives us to underſtand, *is every Man tempted* dangerouſly, *when he is drawn away of his own Luſt, and enticed*[m]. The Enemy within therefore is the moſt formidable one: and againſt this it is chiefly, that we are to *watch, and pray, that we enter not into Temptation:* remembering always, that how *willing* ſoever *the Spirit* may be, yet *the Fleſh is weak*[n].

And now let us obſerve, in the laſt Place, under this Head, that as we are to pray againſt being led into Temptation ourſelves, we ſhould be very careful, never to lead others into it; but do every Thing that we can, to keep them out of it, and deliver them from it: and that, as begging God's Help that we may ſtand, muſt be grounded on a ſtrong Senſe of our Proneneſs to fall; we ſhould ſhew great Compaſſion towards them, who, through the ſame Proneneſs, have fallen. *Brethren, if a Man be overtaken in a Fault; ye, which are ſpiritual, reſtore ſuch a one in the Spirit of Meekneſs: conſidering thyſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted*[o].

[m] James i. 14. [n] Matth. xxvi. 41. [o] Gal. vi. 1.

Thus

Thus we have gone through the ſix Petitions, which compoſe the ſecond Part of the Lord's Prayer; and ſhew it to be worthy of its Author, by diſtinctly comprehending, in ſo little Room, whatever is neceſſary for the Honour of God, and our own Good, both temporal and ſpiritual. What remains further is, to ſpeak briefly of the third Part, which concludes the Whole, by aſcribing to our heavenly Father, the Praiſe *due unto his Name*[p]: acknowledging here more expreſsly, what indeed hath been throughout implied, that His *is the Kingdom*, the rightful Authority and ſupreme Dominion over all: His *the Power*, by which every Thing juſt and good is brought to paſs; His therefore *the Glory* of whatever we his Creatures do, or enjoy, or hope for; of whatever this Univerſe, and the whole Scheme of Things which it comprehends, hath had, or now hath, or ever ſhall have in it, awful or gracious, and worthy of the Admiration of Men and Angels. And as all Dignity and Might and Honour are His; ſo they are His *for*

[p] Pſalm xxix. 2,

ever

ever and ever: originally, independently and unchangeably. *From everlaſting to everlaſting He is God*[q]*: the ſame Yeſterday, To-day, and for ever*[r].

Theſe Words then are, at once, an Act of Homage to his Greatneſs, and Thankſgiving to his Goodneſs: both which ought ever to have a Place in our Prayers; and the Concluſion is a very proper Place. For the infinite Perfections of God our Maker, which we thus celebrate, are the beſt Reaſon poſſible for every Petition that we have offered to Him: and therefore our bleſſed Lord introduces them as the Reaſon. *For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory.* Beſides, ending with theſe Acknowledgments will leave them freſh and ſtrong upon our Minds: eſpecially as we finiſh all with that ſolemn Aſſeveration, *Amen:* which is a Word, uſed in Scripture, only upon ſerious and important Occaſions, to confirm the Truth and Sincerity of what is promiſed, wiſhed, or affirmed. It relates therefore equally to the Whole of the Prayer: and is in Effect declaring, that

[q] Pſ. xc. 2. [r] Heb. xiii. 8.

we

we do heartily believe whatever we have ſaid, and heartily deſire whatever we have aſked.

This Expreſſion therefore may remind us, that our Prayers ſhould always be compoſed, both in ſuch a Language, and ſuch Words in that Language, as all, that are to uſe or join in them, are well acquainted with. For elſe, as St. *Paul* argues, *How ſhall he, that occupieth the Room of the Unlearned, ſay, Amen: ſeeing he underſtandeth not what thou ſayeſt*[a]?

And it ſhould likewiſe remind us very ſtrongly of another Thing, if poſſible, yet more important: that we ſhould never ſay to God, what we cannot ſay with the utmoſt Truth of Heart. Now with what Truth, or what Face, can any Perſon, that lives in any Sin, repeat the Prayer which our Lord hath taught us, and ſay *Amen* to it; when every Sentence in it, if well conſidered, is inconſiſtent with a bad Life? Let us therefore conſider both it and ourſelves very carefully, that we may offer up our Devotions always in an acceptable

[a] 1 Cor. xiv. 16.

Manner,

Manner. For *the Sacrifice of the Wicked is an Abomination to the Lord: but the Prayer of the Upright is his Delight*[t].

[t] Prov. xv. 8.

LECTURE XXXIV.

The Nature and Number of the Sacraments.

THE far greateſt Part of the Duties which we owe to God, flow, as it were, of themſelves, from his Nature and Attributes, and the ſeveral Relations to Him, in which we ſtand, whether made known to us by Reaſon or Scripture. Such are thoſe, which have been hitherto explained to you: the ten Commandments; and Prayer for the Grace, which our fallen Condition requires, in order to keep them. But there are ſtill ſome other important Precepts peculiar to Chriſtianity, and deriving their whole Obligation from our Saviour's Inſtitution of them: concerning which it is highly requiſite that our Catechiſm ſhould inſtruct us, before it concludes. And theſe are the two Sacraments.

The

The Word *Sacrament*, by Virtue of its Original in the Latin Tongue, ſignifies any ſacred or holy Thing or Action: and among the Heathens was particularly applied to denote, ſometimes a Pledge, depoſited in a ſacred Place [a]; ſometimes an Oath, the moſt ſacred of Obligations; and eſpecially that Oath of Fidelity, which the Soldiery took to their General. In Scripture it is not uſed at all. By the early Writers of the Weſtern Church it was uſed to expreſs almoſt any Thing relating to our holy Religion; at leaſt any Thing that was figurative, and ſignified ſomewhat further than at firſt Sight appeared. But afterwards a more confined Uſe of the Word prevailed by Degrees: and in that ſtricter Senſe, which hath long been the common one, and which our Catechiſm follows, the Nature of a Sacrament comprehends the following Particulars.

1. There muſt be *an outward and viſible Sign:* the ſolemn Application of ſome bodily and ſenſible Thing or Action, to a Meaning and Purpoſe which in its own Na-

[a] Eden. Elem. Jur. Civ. p. 238. Gronov. in Plaut. Rud. 5. 3, 21.

ture it hath not. In common Life, we have many other Signs to expreſs our Meanings, on Occaſions of great Conſequence, beſides Words. And no wonder then, if, in Religion, we have ſome of the ſame Kind.

2. In a Sacrament, the outward and viſible Sign muſt denote *an inward and ſpiritual Grace given unto us:* that is, ſome Favour freely beſtowed on us from Heaven; by which our inward and ſpiritual Condition, the State of our Souls, is made better. Moſt of the ſignificative Actions, that we uſe in Religion, expreſs only our Duty to God. Thus kneeling in Prayer is uſed to ſhew our Reverence towards Him to whom we pray. And ſigning a Child with the Croſs, after it is baptized, declares our Obligation not to be aſhamed of the Croſs of Chriſt. But a Sacrament, beſides expreſſing, on our Part, Duty to God, expreſſes, on his Part, ſome Grace or Favour towards us.

3. In order to intitle any Thing to the Name of a Sacrament, a further Requiſite is, that it be *ordained by Chriſt himſelf.* We may indeed uſe, on the foot of human Authority alone, Actions, that ſet forth either

our Senſe of any Duty, or our Belief in God's Grace. For it is certainly as lawful to expreſs a good Meaning by any other proper Sign as by Words. But then, ſuch Marks as theſe, which we commonly call Ceremonies, as they are taken up at Pleaſure, may be laid aſide again at Pleaſure; and ought to be laid aſide, whenever they grow too numerous, or Abuſes are made of them, which cannot eaſily be reformed: and this hath frequently been the Caſe. But Sacraments are of perpetual Obligation: for they ſtand on the Authority of Chriſt; who hath certainly appointed nothing to be for ever obſerved in his Church, but what He ſaw would be for ever uſeful. Nor doth every Appointment of Chriſt, though it be of perpetual Obligation, deſerve the Name of a Sacrament: but thoſe, and no other, which are,

4. Not only Signs of Grace, but *Means* alſo, *whereby we receive the ſame*. None but our bleſſed Lord could appoint ſuch Means: and which of his Ordinances ſhould be ſuch, and which not, none but Himſelf could determine. From his Word therefore we are

to

to learn it: and then, as we hope to attain the End, we muſt uſe the Means. But when it is ſaid, that the Sacraments are Means of Grace; we are not to underſtand, either that the Performance of the mere outward Action doth, by its own Virtue, produce a ſpiritual Effect in us; or that God hath annexed any ſuch Effect to that alone: but that He will accompany the Action with his Bleſſing, provided it be done as it ought; with thoſe Qualifications which He requires. And therefore, unleſs we fulfil the Condition, we muſt not expect the Benefit.

Further; calling the Sacraments, Means of Grace, doth not ſignify them to be Means by which we merit Grace: for nothing but the Sufferings of our bleſſed Saviour can do that for us; but Means, by which what He hath merited is conveyed to us.

Nor yet are they the only Means of conveying Grace: for reading, and hearing, and meditating upon the Word of God, are Part of the Things which He hath appointed for this End: and Prayer is another Part, accompanied with an expreſs

Promiſe, that, if we *aſk, we ſhall receive* [b]. But theſe, not being ſuch Actions as figure out and repreſent the Benefits which they derive to us, though they are Means of Grace, are not Signs of it; and therefore do not come under the Notion of Sacraments. But,

5. A Sacrament is not only a Sign or Repreſentation of ſome heavenly Favour, and a Means whereby we receive it, but alſo *a Pledge to aſſure us thereof.* Not that any Thing can give us a greater Aſſurance, in Point of Reaſon, of any Bleſſing from God, than his bare Promiſe can do: but that ſuch Obſervances, appointed in Token of his Promiſes, affect our Imaginations with a ſtronger Senſe of them: and make a deeper and more laſting, and therefore more uſeful, Impreſſion on our Minds. For this Cauſe, in all Nations of the World, Repreſentations by Action have ever been uſed, as well as Words, upon ſolemn Occaſions: eſpecially upon entering into and renewing Treaties and Covenants with each other. And therefore, in Condeſcenſion to a Prac-

[b] John xvi. 24.

tice, which, being ſo univerſal among Men, appears to be founded in the Nature of Man; God hath graciouſly added to his Covenant alſo, the Solemnity of certain outward inſtructive Performances; by which he declares to us, that as ſurely as our Bodies are waſhed by Water, and nouriſhed by Bread broken and Wine poured forth and received; ſo ſurely are our Souls purified from Sin by the Baptiſm of Repentance; and ſtrengthened in all Goodneſs, by partaking of that Mercy, which the wounding of the Body of Chriſt, and the ſhedding of his Blood, hath obtained for us. And thus theſe religious Actions, ſo far as they are performed by God's Miniſter, in Purſuance of his Appointment, are an Earneſt or Pledge on his Part, which (as I obſerved to you) was one ancient Signification of the Word Sacrament: and ſo far as we join in them, they are an Obligation, binding like an Oath, on our Part, as ſhall be hereafter ſhewn you: which was the other primitive Meaning of the Word.

Having thus explained to you the Deſcription of a Sacrament, given in the Cate-

chiſm; let us now conſider, what Things we have in our Religion that anſwer to it. For the Papiſts reckon no leſs than ſeven Sacraments. And though this Number was not named for above 1000 Years after Chriſt; nor fixed, by the Authority of even their own Church, till 200 Years ago, that is, ſince the Reformation; yet now they accurſe Us, for not agreeing with them in it, but acknowledging only two.

The firſt of their five is Confirmation. And if this be a Sacrament, we adminiſter it as well as they, indeed much more agreeably to the original Practice; and are therefore intitled, at leaſt, to the ſame Benefit from it. But though Chriſt did indeed *put his Hands on Children, and bleſs them*[c]; yet we do not read, that He appointed this particular Ceremony for a Means of conveying Grace. And though the Apoſtles did uſe it after Him, as others had done before Him; yet there is no Foundation to aſcribe any ſeparate Efficacy to the laying on of Hands, as diſtinct from the Prayers that accompany it: or to look upon the Whole

[c] Mark x. 16.

of

of Confirmation as any Thing elſe, than a ſolemn Manner of Perſons taking upon themſelves their baptiſmal Vow, followed by the ſolemn Addreſſes of the Biſhop and the Congregation, that they may ever keep it: in which Addreſſes, laying on of Hands is uſed, partly as a Mark of Good-Will to the Perſon for whom the Prayers are offered up; and partly alſo as a Sign, that the fatherly Hand of God is over all who undertake to ſerve Him: yet without any Claim of conveying his Grace particularly by it; but only with Intention of praying for his Grace along with it: which Prayers however we have ſo juſt Ground to hope he will hear, that they who neglect this Ordinance, though not a Sacrament, are greatly wanting both to their Intereſt and their Duty.

Another Sacrament of the Church of *Rome* is Penance; which they make to conſiſt of particular Confeſſion to the Prieſt of every deadly Sin, particular Abſolution from him, and ſuch Acts of Devotion, Mortification, or Charity, as he ſhall think fit to enjoin. But no one Part of this being re-

quired in Scripture, much leſs any outward Sign of it appointed, or any inward Grace annexed to it; there is nothing in the Whole that hath any Appearance of a Sacrament; but too much Suſpicion of a Contrivance to gain undue Influence and Power.

A third Sacrament of theirs is, extreme Unction. But their Plea for it is no more than this. St. *James*, at a Time when miraculous Gifts were common, directed *the Elders of the Church*, who uſually had thoſe Gifts, to *anoint the Sick with Oil*[d]: as we read the Diſciples did, whilſt our Saviour was on Earth[e]; in order to obtain by the *Prayer of Faith*, (that *Faith* which could *remove Mountains*[f]) the Recovery, if God ſaw fit, of their bodily Health; and the Forgiveneſs of thoſe Sins for which their Diſeaſe was inflicted, if they had committed any ſuch. And upon this, the Church of *Rome*, now all ſuch miraculous Gifts are ceaſed, continues notwithſtanding to anoint the Sick, for a quite different Purpoſe: not at all for the Recovery of their Health;

[d] Jam. v. 14. 15. [e] Mark vi. 13. [f] Matth. xvii. 20. xxi. 21. Mark x. 23.

for

for they do not uſe it till they think them very nearly, if not quite paſt Recovery; nor indeed for the Pardon of their Sins, for theſe, they ſay, are pardoned upon Confeſſion, which commonly is made before it; but chiefly, as themſelves own, to procure Compoſedneſs and Courage in the Hour of Death: a Purpoſe not only unmentioned by St. *James*, but inconſiſtent with the Purpoſe of Recovery, which he doth mention, and very often impoſſible to be attained. For they frequently anoint Perſons after they are become intirely ſenſeleſs. And yet, in Spite of all theſe Things, they will needs have this Practice owned for a Sacrament: which indeed is now, as they manage it, a mere Piece of Superſtition.

Another Thing, which they eſteem a Chriſtian Sacrament, is Matrimony: tho' it was ordained, not by Chriſt, but long before his Appearance on Earth, in the Time of Man's Innocency; and hath no outward Sign appointed in it, as a Means and Pledge of inward Grace. But the whole Matter is, that they have happened moſt

moſt ridiculouſly to miſtake their own Latin Tranſlation of the New Teſtament: where St. *Paul*, having compared the Union between the firſt married Pair, *Adam* and *Eve*, to that between Chriſt, the ſecond *Adam*, and his Spouſe the Church; and having ſaid that *this is a great Myſtery* [z]; a Figure, or Compariſon, not fully and commonly underſtood: the old Interpreter, whoſe Verſion they uſe, for *Myſtery* hath put *Sacrament*: which in his Days, as I ſaid before, ſignified any Thing in Religion that carried a hidden Meaning: and they have underſtood him of what we now call a Sacrament. Whereas if every Thing, that once had that Name in the larger Senſe of the Word, were at preſent to have it in the ſtricter Senſe; there would be a hundred Sacraments, inſtead of the ſeven, which they pretend there are.

The fifth and laſt Thing, which they wrongly inſiſt on our honouring with this Title, is, holy Orders. But, as there are three Orders in the Church, Biſhops, Prieſts, and Deacons; here would be three Sacraments, if there were any: but indeed there

[z] Eph. v. 32.

is none. For the laying on of Hands in Ordination is neither appointed, nor uſed, to convey or ſignify any ſpiritual Grace: but only to confer a Right of executing ſuch an Office in the Church of Chriſt. And though Prayers, for God's Grace and Bleſſing on the Perſon ordained, are indeed very juſtly and uſefully added; and will certainly be heard, unleſs the Perſon be unworthy: yet theſe Prayers, on this Occaſion, no more make what is done a Sacrament, than any other Prayers for God's Grace, on any other Occaſion.

However, as I have already ſaid of Confirmation, ſo I ſay now of Orders and Marriage, if they were Sacraments, they would be as much ſo to us, as to the *Romaniſts*, whether we called them Sacraments, or not. And if we uſed the Name ever ſo erroneouſly, indeed if we never uſed it at all; as the Scripture hath never uſed it; that could do us no Harm, provided, under any Name, we believe but the Things, which Chriſt hath taught; and do but the Things which He hath commanded: for on this, and this alone, depends our Acceptance, and eternal Salvation.

LEC-

is meant [illegible] for the laying on of Hands in Confirmation [illegible] (are appointed) provided to [illegible] quent [illegible] appointment. [illegible] but [illegible] to confer a Right of performing [illegible] Office in the Church of Christ. And though Prayers for God's Grace and Blessing on the Person ordained, are indeed very fitly and usefully added; and will certainly be heard, unless the Person be unworthy: yet these Prayers, on this Occasion, no more make what is done a Sacrament, than any other Prayers for God's Grace, on any other Occasion.

However, as I have already said of Confirmation, so I say now of Orders and Marriage, if they were Sacraments, they would be as much so to us as to the Romanists, whether we called them Sacraments, or not. And if we used the Name ever so circumspectly, indeed if we never used that Name at all [illegible] Scripture hath never used it, it would do us no Harm, only [illegible] under any Name, [illegible] but the Things which [illegible] hath taught; and neither the Things which [illegible] hath commanded [illegible] on us, and these alone, depends our Acceptance, and eternal Salvation.

LEC-

LECTURE XXXV.

Of Baptiſm.

HAVING already explained to you the Nature of a Sacrament; and ſhewn you, that five of the ſeven Things, which the Church of *Rome* calls by that Name, are not intitled to it; there remain only two, that are truly ſuch: and theſe two are plainly ſufficient: one, for our Entrance into the Chriſtian Covenant; the other, during our whole Continuance in it: *Baptiſm, and the Supper of the Lord.* However, as the Word Sacrament is not a Scripture one, and hath at different Times been differently underſtood: our Catechiſm doth not require it to be ſaid abſolutely, that the Sacraments are *two only*; but *two only, neceſſary to Salvation:* leaving Perſons at Liberty to comprehend more Things under the Name, if they pleaſe, provided they inſiſt

insist not on the Necessity of them, and of dignifying them with this Title. And even these two, our Church very charitably teaches us not to look upon as indispensably, but as *generally, necessary*. Out of which general Necessity, we are to except those particular Cases, where Believers in Christ, either have not the Means of performing their Duty in Respect to the Sacraments, or are innocently ignorant of it, or even excusably mistaken about it.

In explaining the Sacrament of *Baptism*, I shall speak, first of *the outward and visible Sign*, then of *the inward and spiritual Grace*.

As to the former: Baptism being intended for the Sign and Means of our Purification from Sin; Water, the proper Element for purifying and cleansing, is appointed to be used in it. There is indeed a Sect, sprung up amongst us within a little more than an hundred Years, that deny this Appointment: and make the Christian Baptism signify only the pouring out of the Gift of the Holy Ghost upon a Person. But our Saviour expressly requires that we be *born of Water*, as well as *of the Spirit*,

Spirit, to *enter into the Kingdom of God* [a]. And not only *John*, his Forerunner, *baptized with Water* [b], but his *Diſciples* alſo, by his Direction, *baptized* in the ſame Manner, even *more than John* [c]. When therefore He bad them afterwards *teach all Nations*, *baptizing them* [d]: what Baptiſm could they underſtand, but that, in which He had employed them before? And accordingly, we find, they did underſtand that. *Philip*, we read, baptized the Samaritans [e]: not with the Holy Ghoſt, for the Apoſtles went down ſome Time after to do that themſelves [f]: but with Water undoubtedly, as we find in the ſame Chapter, he did the Eunuch: where the Words are, *Here is Water: what doth hinder me to be baptized? And they went down to the Water: and he baptized him* [g]. Again, after *Cornelius*, and his Friends, had received the Holy Ghoſt, and ſo were already baptized in that Senſe, *Peter* aſks, *Can any Man forbid Water, that theſe ſhould not be baptized, which have re-*

[a] John iii. 5. [b] Matth. iii. 11. [c] John iv. 1, 2.
[d] Matth. xxviii. 19. [e] Acts viii. 12. [f] Verſe 14, &c.
[g] Verſe 36, 38.

ceived the Holy Ghoſt, as well as we[h]? When therefore *John* ſays, that *He baptized with Water, but Chriſt ſhall baptize with the Holy Ghoſt*[i]; he means, not that Chriſtians ſhould not be baptized with Water, but that they ſhould have the Holy Ghoſt poured out upon them alſo, in a Degree that *John's* Diſciples had not. When St. *Peter* ſays, *The Baptiſm, which ſaveth us, is not the waſhing away the Filth of the Fleſh*[k]; he means, it is not the mere outward Act, unaccompanied by a ſuitable inward Diſpoſition. When St. *Paul* ſays, that *Chriſt ſent him not to baptize, but to preach the Goſpel*[l]; he means, that preaching was the principal Thing he was to do in Perſon: to baptize, he might appoint others under him; and it ſeems, commonly did: as St. *Peter* did not baptize *Cornelius* and his Friends himſelf, but *commanded them to be baptized*[m]; and we read in St. *John*, that *Jeſus baptized not, but his Diſciples*[n].

Water-Baptiſm therefore is appointed. And why the Church of *Rome* ſhould not

[h] Acts x. 47. [i] Matth. iii. 11. [k] 1 Pet. iii. 21.
[l] 1 Cor. i. 17. [m] Acts x. 48. [n] John iv. 2.

think

think Water ſufficient in Baptiſm, but aim at mending what our Saviour hath directed, by mixing Oil and Balſam with it, and dipping a lighted Torch into it, I leave them to explain.

The preciſe Manner, in which Water ſhall be applied in Baptiſm, Scripture hath not determined. For the Word, *baptize*, means only to waſh: whether that be done by plunging a Thing under Water, or pouring the Water upon it. The former of theſe; burying, as it were, the Perſon baptized, in the Water, and raiſing him out of it again, without Queſtion was anciently the more uſual Method: on Account of which, St. *Paul* ſpeaks of Baptiſm, as repreſenting both the Death, and Burial, and Reſurrection of Chriſt, and what is grounded on them, our being *dead and buried to Sin*; renouncing it, and being acquitted of it; and our riſing again, to *walk in Newneſs of Life*[o]; being both obliged and enabled to practice, for the future, every Duty of Piety and Virtue. But ſtill the other Manner of waſhing, by pouring or ſprinkling of Wa-

[o] Rom. vi. 4, 11. Col. ii. 12.

ter, ſufficiently expreſſes the ſame two Things: our being by this Ordinance purified from the Guilt of Sin, and bound and qualified to keep ourſelves pure from the Defilement of it. Beſides, it very naturally repreſents that *Sprinkling of the Blood of Jeſus Chriſt* [p], to which our Salvation is owing. And the Uſe of it ſeems not only to be foretold by the Prophet *Iſaiah*, ſpeaking of our Saviour, *He ſhall ſprinkle many Nations* [q], that is, many ſhall receive his Baptiſm; and by the Prophet *Ezekiel*, *Then will I ſprinkle clean Water upon you, and ye ſhall be clean* [r]: but to be had in View alſo by the Apoſtle, where he ſpeaks of *having our Hearts ſprinkled from an evil Conſcience, and our Bodies waſhed with pure Water* [s]. And though it was leſs frequently uſed in the firſt Ages, it muſt almoſt of Neceſſity have been ſometimes uſed: for Inſtance, when Baptiſm was adminiſtred, as we read in the Acts it was, to ſeveral Thouſands at once [t]; when it was adminiſtred on a ſudden in private Houſes, as we find it, in the ſame Book,

[p] 1 Pet. i. 2. [q] Iſaiah lii. 15. [r] Ezek. xxxvi. 25.
[s] Heb. x. 22. [t] Acts ii. 41.

to

to the Goaler and all his Family, the very Night in which they were converted [u]: or when ſick Perſons received it; in which laſt Caſe, the preſent Method was always taken, becauſe the other of dipping them, might have been dangerous. And from the ſame Apprehenſion of Danger in theſe colder Countries, pouring the Water is allowed, even when the Perſon baptized is in Health. And the particular Manner being left at Liberty, that is now univerſally choſen, which is looked on as ſafer: becauſe were there more to be ſaid for the other, than there is; God *will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice* [w].

But waſhing with Water is not the whole outward Part of this Sacrament. For our Saviour commanded his Apoſtles, not only to *baptize all Nations*, but to *baptize them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt* [x]. Sometimes indeed the Scripture ſpeaks of Baptiſm, as if it were adminiſtred only *in the Name of the Lord Jeſus* [y]. But it fully ap-

[u] Acts xvi. 33. [w] Hoſ. vi. 6. Matth. ix. 13. xii. 7.
[x] Matth. xxviii. 19. [y] Acts ii. 38. x. 48. xix. 5.

pears[z], that the Name of the Holy Ghoſt, was uſed at the ſame Time: and therefore that of the Father, we may be ſure. Now being baptized *in the Name* of theſe Three may ſignify, being baptized by Virtue of their Authority. But the exacter Tranſlation is, *into the Name:* and the fuller Import of the Expreſſion is, by this ſolemn Action taking upon us their Name; (for Servants are known by the Name of their Maſter) and profeſſing ourſelves devoted to the Faith, and Worſhip, and Obedience of theſe Three; our Creator, our Redeemer, our Sanctifier. In this Profeſſion, the whole of Chriſtianity is briefly comprehended, and on this Foundation therefore the ancient Creeds are all built.

The ſecond and principal Thing in Baptiſm, *the inward and ſpiritual Grace*, is ſaid in the Catechiſm to be, *a Death unto Sin, and a new Birth unto Righteouſneſs: for that being by Nature born in Sin, and the Children of Wrath, we are hereby made the Children of Grace.* The former Part of theſe Words refers to the old Cuſtom of baptizing by

[z] Acts xix. 2, 3.

dipping, juſt now mentioned: and the Meaning of the whole is this. Our firſt Parents, having, by Diſobedience in eating the forbidden Fruit, corrupted their own Nature; ours, being derived from them, received of Neceſſity an original Taint of the ſame Diſorder: and therefore coming into the World under the ill Effects of their Sin; and being, from the Time of our entering into it, prone to ſin ourſelves: we are ſaid to be *born in Sin*. And they having alſo, by the ſame Diſobedience, forfeited their Immortality; we, as deſcending from them, became mortal of Courſe: and inheriting by way of natural Conſequence, what they ſuffered as a Mark of God's Wrath; we, their Children, are ſaid to be *Children of Wrath*. Not that God, with whatever Diſapprobation He muſt view our native Depravity, is, or, properly ſpeaking, can be angry with us perſonally, for what was not our perſonal Fault. But He might undoubtedly both refuſe us that Immortality, which our firſt Parents had forfeited, and to which we have no Right; and leave us without Help, to the poor Degree of

Strength, that remained to us in our fallen Condition; the Effect of which muſt have been; that had we done our beſt, as we were intitled to no Reward from his Juſtice, ſo it had been ſuch a Nothing, that we could have hoped for little, if any, from his Bounty: and had we not done our beſt, as no Man hath, we had no Aſſurance, that even Repentance would ſecure us from Puniſhment. But what in ſtrict Juſtice He might have done, in his infinite Goodneſs He hath not done. For the firſt Covenant being broken by *Adam*, He hath entered into a new one with Mankind, through Jeſus Chriſt: in which He hath promiſed to free us, both from the Mortality, which our firſt Parents had brought upon us, by reſtoring us to Life again; and from the Inability, by the powerful Aſſiſtance of his Holy Spirit. Nay further yet, He hath promiſed, (and without it the reſt would have been of ſmall Uſe) that ſhould we, notwithſtanding his Aſſiſtance, fail in our Duty, when we might have performed it; as we have all failed, and made ourſelves, by that Means, *Children of Wrath*, in the

ſtricteſt and worſt Senſe: yet, on moſt equitable Terms, He would ſtill receive us to Mercy anew. And thus the Chriſtian Covenant, delivering us, if we are faithful to it, from every Thing we had to fear, and beſtowing on us every Thing we could hope, brings us into a State ſo unſpeakably different from our former; that it is juſtly expreſſed by being dead to that, and born into another. And this new Birth being effected by the Grace or Goodneſs of God, external and internal, we, the Children of it, are properly called *the Children of Grace*. Now Baptiſm is not only a Sign of this Grace; (as indeed it ſignifies very naturally the waſhing off both of our original Corruption, and our actual Guilt) but the appointed Way of entering into the Covenant that intitles us to ſuch Grace; the *Means whereby we receive the ſame, and a Pledge to aſſure us thereof.*

Indeed the mere outward Act of being baptized is, as St. *Peter*, in the Words already mentioned, very truly expreſſes it, the mere *putting away of the Filth of the Fleſh*; unleſs it be made effectual to ſave us, as he

teaches in the ſame Place it muſt, by *the Anſwer of a good Conſcience towards God*[a]: that is, by the ſincere Stipulation and Engagement of *Repentance, whereby we forſake Sin; and Faith, whereby we believe the Promiſes of God, made to us in that Sacrament.* For it is impoſſible that He ſhould forgive us our paſt Sins, unleſs we are ſorry for them, and reſolved to quit them: and it is as impoſſible that we ſhould quit them effectually, unleſs a firm Perſuaſion of his helping and rewarding us excite and ſupport our Endeavours. Theſe two Things therefore we ſee our Catechiſm juſtly mentions as neceſſary, in Anſwer to the Queſtion, *What is required of Perſons to be baptized?* Both have been explained in their proper Place, and therefore I enlarge on neither here.

But hence ariſes immediately another Queſtion: If theſe Conditions are neceſſary, *why are Infants baptized, when by Reaſon of their tender Age they cannot perform them?* And as this Difficulty appears to ſome a great one, I ſhall give a fuller Solution of it than the Shortneſs of a Catechiſm would eaſily

[a] 1 Pet. iii. 21.

permit,

permit. Repentance and Faith are requiſite, not before they are poſſible, but when they are poſſible. Repentance is what Infants need not as yet, being clear of perſonal Guilt: and happy would it be, were they never to need it. Faith, it may be reaſonably preſumed, by the Security given for their Chriſtian Education, they will have, as ſoon as they have Occaſion to exert it. And in the mean Time, Baptiſm may very fitly be adminiſtred: becauſe God, on his Part, can certainly expreſs by it, both his removing, at preſent, the Diſadvantages which they lie under by the Sin of *Adam*: and his removing hereafter, on proper Conditions, the Diſadvantages which they may come to lie under by their own Sins. And though they cannot, on their Parts, expreſsly promiſe to perform theſe Conditions; yet they are not only bound to perform them, whether they promiſe it or not; but (which is the Point that our Catechiſm inſiſts on) their Sureties promiſe for them, that they ſhall be made ſenſible, as ſoon as may be, that they are ſo bound; and ratify the Engagement in their own Perſons:

which

which when they do, it then becomes complete. For it is by no Means neceſſary, that a Covenant ſhould be executed, by both the Parties to it, at juſt the ſame Time: and as the Chriſtian Covenant is one of the greateſt Equity and Favour, we cannot *doubt*, to ſpeak in the Language of our Liturgy, *but that God favourably alloweth the charitable Work of bringing Infants to his holy Baptiſm.* For *the Promiſe* of the Covenant being expreſsly ſaid to belong *to us and to our Children*[b], without any Limitation of Age; why ſhould they not all, ſince they are to partake of the Promiſe, partake alſo of the Sign of it? eſpecially, ſince the Infants of the Jews were, by a ſolemn Sign, entered into their Covenant; and the Infants of Proſelytes to the Jews, by this very Sign, amongſt others, of Baptiſm. So that, ſuppoſing the Apoſtles to imitate either of theſe Examples, as they naturally would, unleſs they were forbidden, which they were not: when they baptized (as the Scripture, without making any Exception, tells us they did) whole Families at once[c];

[b] Acts ii. 39. [c] Acts xvi. 15, 33.

wo

we cannot queſtion but they baptized (as we know the primitive Chriſtians, their Succeſſors, did) *little Children* amongſt the reſt; concerning whom our Saviour ſays, that *of ſuch is the Kingdom of God*[d]: and St. *Paul* ſays, *they are holy*[e]; which they cannot be reputed, without entering into the Goſpel Covenant: and the only appointed Way of entering into it is by Baptiſm; which therefore is conſtantly repreſented in the New Teſtament as neceſſary to Salvation.

Not that ſuch Converts, in ancient Times, as were put to Death for their Faith, before they could be baptized, loſt their Reward for Want of it. Not that ſuch Children of Believers now, as die unbaptized by ſudden Illneſs, or unexpected Accidents, or even by Neglect, (ſince it is none of their own Neglect) ſhall forfeit the Advantages of Baptiſm. This would be very contrary to that Mercy and Grace, which abounds through the whole of the Goſpel Diſpenſation. Nay, where the Perſons themſelves do deſignedly, through miſtaken Notions,

[d] Mark x. 14. [e] 1 Cor. vii. 14.

either

either delay their Baptiſm, as the Anabaptiſts; or omit it intirely, as the Quakers; even of theſe it belongs to Chriſtian Charity not to judge hardly, as excluded from the Goſpel Covenant, if they die unbaptized; but to leave them to the equitable Judgment of God. Both of them indeed err: and the latter eſpecially have, one ſhould think, as little Excuſe for their Error as well can be: for ſurely there is no Duty of Chriſtianity which ſtands on a plainer Foundation, than that of baptizing with Water in the Name of the Holy Trinity. But ſtill, ſince they ſolemnly declare, that they believe in Chriſt, and deſire to obey his Commands; and omit Water-Baptiſm only becauſe they cannot ſee it is commanded; we ought (if we have Cauſe to think they ſpeak Truth) by no Means to conſider them in the ſame Light with total Unbelievers.

But the wilful and the careleſs Deſpiſers of this Ordinance: who, admitting it to be of God's Appointment, neglect it notwithſtanding; theſe are not to be looked on as within his Covenant. And ſuch as, though they do obſerve it for Form's Sake, treat it

as

as an empty inſignificant Ceremony, are very unworthy of the Benefits which it was intended to convey. And, bad as theſe Things are, little better, if not worſe, will be the Caſe of thoſe, who, acknowledging the ſolemn Engagements into which they have entered by this Sacrament, live without Care to make them good. For to the only valuable Purpoſe, of God's Favour and eternal Happineſs, *He is not a* Chriſtian, *which is one outwardly; neither is that* Baptiſm *which is outward in the fleſh: but He is a* Chriſtian, *which is one inwardly; and* Baptiſm *is that of the Heart, in the Spirit, and not in the Letter; whoſe Praiſe is not of Men, but of God*[f].

[f] Rom. ii. 28, 29.

LECTURE XXXVI.

Of the LORD'S SUPPER.

PART I.

AS by the Sacrament of Baptiſm we enter into the Chriſtian Covenant; ſo by that of the Lord's Supper we profeſs our thankful Continuance in it: and therefore the firſt Anſwer of our Catechiſm, concerning this Ordinance, tells us, it was appointed *For the continual Remembrance of the Sacrifice of the Death of Chriſt, and of the Benefits which we receive thereby.* Now the Nature and Benefits of this Sacrifice have been already explained, in their proper Places. I ſhall therefore proceed to ſhew, that the Lord's Supper is rightly ſaid here to be *ordained for a Remembrance* of it; not a Repetition, as the Church of *Rome* teaches.

Indeed

Indeed every Act, both of Worſhip and Obedience, is in ſome Senſe a Sacrifice to God, humbly offered up to Him for his Acceptance. And this Sacrament in particular, being a Memorial and Repreſentation of the Sacrifice of Chriſt, ſolemnly and religiouſly made, may well enough be called, in a figurative Way of ſpeaking, by the ſame Name with what it commemorates and repreſents. But that He ſhould be really and literally offered up in it, is the directeſt Contradiction that can be, not only to common Senſe, but alſo to Scripture, which expreſsly ſays, that He was not to be *offered often, for then muſt He often have ſuffered; but hath appeared once to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of Himſelf*[a], and after that *for ever ſat down on the right Hand of God: for by one Offering He hath perfected for ever them that are ſanctified*[b].

This Ordinance then was appointed, not to repeat, but to commemorate the Sacrifice of Chriſt; which though we are required to do, and do accordingly, more or leſs explicitly, in all our Acts of Devotion, yet we are not

[a] Heb. ix. 25, 26. [b] Heb. x. 12, 14.

required

required to do it by any visible Representation, but that of the Lord's Supper: of which therefore our Catechism teaches, in the second Answer; that *the outward Part, or Sign, is Bread and Wine, which the Lord hath commanded to be received.* And indeed he hath so clearly commanded both to be received, that no reasonable Defence in the least can be made, either for the Sect usually called Quakers, who omit this Sacrament entirely; or for the Church of *Rome*, who deprive the Laity of one half of it, the Cup; and forbid all but the Priest to do, what Christ hath appointed all without Exception to do. They plead indeed, that all, whom Christ appointed to receive the Cup; that is, the Apostles; were Priests. But their Church forbids the Priests themselves to receive it, excepting those who perform the Service: which the Apostles did not perform, but their Master. And besides, if the Appointment of receiving the Cup belongs only to Priests, that of receiving the Bread too must relate only to Priests: for our Saviour hath more expressly directed *all* to drink of the one, than to eat of the

other. But they own, that his Appointment obliges the Laity to receive the Bread: and therefore it obliges them to receive the Cup alſo: which that they did accordingly, 1 *Cor.* xi. makes as plain as Words can make any Thing: nor was it refuſed them for 1200 Years after. They plead farther, that adminiſtring the holy Sacrament is called in Scripture *breaking of Bread*, without mentioning the Cup at all. And we allow it. But when common Feaſts are expreſſed in Scripture by the ſingle Phraſe of *eating Bread*, ſurely this doth not prove that the Gueſts drank nothing: and if, in this religious Feaſt, the like Phraſe could prove, that the Laity did not partake of the Cup, it will prove equally, that the Prieſts did not partake of it either. They plead in the laſt Place, that by receiving the Bread, which is the Body of Chriſt, we receive in Effect the Cup, which is the Blood, at the ſame Time: for the Blood is contained in the Body. But here, beſides that our Saviour, who was ſurely the beſt Judge, appointed both; they quite forget, that this Sacrament is a Memorial of his

Blood

Blood being ſhed out of his Body: of which, without the Cup, there can be no Commemoration: or, if there could, the Cup would be as needleſs for the Clergy as for the Laity.

The outward Signs therefore, which Chriſt hath commanded to be received, equally received, by all Chriſtians, are Bread and Wine. Of theſe the *Jews* had been accuſtomed to partake, in a ſerious and devout Manner, at all their Feaſts, after a ſolemn Bleſſing, or Thankſgiving to God, made over them, for his Goodneſs to Men. But eſpecially at the Feaſt of the Paſſover, which our Saviour was celebrating with his Diſciples, when he inſtituted this holy Sacrament; at that Feaſt, in the abovementioned Thankſgiving, they commemorated more at large the Mercies of their God, dwelling chiefly however on their Deliverance from the Bondage of *Egypt*. Now this having many Particulars reſembling that infinitely more important Redemption of all Mankind from Sin and Ruin, which our Saviour was then about to accompliſh; He very naturally directed his Diſciples, that

their ancient Cuſtom ſhould for the future be applied to this greateſt of divine Bleſſings, and become the Memorial of *Chriſt, their Paſſover, ſacrificed for them*[c]: as indeed the Bread broken aptly enough repreſented his Body; and the Wine poured forth moſt expreſſively figured out his Blood, ſhed for our Salvation. Theſe therefore, as the third Anſwer of our Catechiſm very juſtly teaches, are *the inward Part* of this Sacrament, *or the Thing ſignified.*

But the Church of *Rome*, inſtead of being content with ſaying, that the Bread and Wine are Signs of the Body and Blood of Chriſt, inſiſt on it, that they are turned into the very Subſtance of his Body and Blood: which imagined Change they therefore call Tranſubſtantiation. Now were this true, there would be no outward Sign left: for they ſay, it is converted into the Thing ſignified: and by Conſequence there would be no Sacrament left: for a Sacrament is *an outward Sign of an inward Grace.*

Beſides, if our Senſes can in any Caſe inform us what any Thing is, they inform us,

[c] 1 Cor. v. 7.

that the Bread and Wine continue Bread and Wine. And if we cannot truſt our Senſes, when we have full Opportunity of uſing them all; how did the Apoſtles know that our Saviour taught them, and performed Miracles; or how do we know any one Thing around us? But this Doctrine is equally contrary to all Reaſon too. To believe that our Saviour took his own Body, literally ſpeaking, in his own Hands, and gave the whole of that one Body to every one of his Apoſtles, and that each of them ſwallowed Him down their Throats, though all the while He continued ſitting at the Table before their Eyes: to believe, that the very ſame one individual Body, which is now in Heaven, is alſo in many thouſands of different Places on Earth; in ſome, ſtanding ſtill upon the Altar; in others, carrying along the Streets; and ſo in Motion, and not in Motion, at the ſame Time: to believe, that the ſame Body can come from a great diſtance, and meet itſelf, as the ſacramental Bread often doth in their Proceſſions, and then paſs by itſelf, and go away from itſelf to the ſame Diſtance

again; is to believe the moſt abſolute Impoſſibilities and Contradictions. If ſuch Things can be true, nothing can be falſe; and if ſuch Things cannot be true, the Church that teaches them cannot be infallible, whatever Arts of puzzling Sophiſtry they may uſe to prove either that or any of their Doctrines. For no Reaſonings are ever to be minded againſt plain common Senſe.

They muſt not ſay, this Doctrine is a Myſtery. For there is no Myſtery, no Obſcurity in it: but it is as plainly ſeen to be an Error, as any Thing elſe is ſeen to be a Truth. And the more ſo, becauſe it relates, not to an infinite Nature, as God; but entirely to what is finite, a Bit of Bread and a human Body. They muſt not plead, that God can do all Things. For that means only that He can do all Things that can be done: not that He can do what cannot be done; make a Thing be this and not be this, be here and elſewhere, at the ſame Time: which is doing and undoing at once, and ſo in Reality doing nothing. They muſt not alledge Scripture for Abſurdities, that would

would ſooner prove Scripture falſe, than Scripture can prove them true. But it no where teaches them.

We own that our Saviour ſays, *This is my Body, which is broken*[d], and, *This is my Blood, which is ſhed*[e]. But he could not mean literally. For as yet his Body was not broken, nor his Blood ſhed: nor is either of them in that Condition now. And therefore the Bread and Wine neither could then, nor can now, be turned into them, as ſuch. Beſides, our Saviour ſaid at the ſame Time, *This Cup is the New Teſtament in my Blood*[f]. Was the Subſtance of the Cup then changed into the New Teſtament? And if not, why are we to think the Subſtance of the Bread and Wine changed into his Body and Blood? The Apoſtle ſays, *the Rock*, that ſupplied the *Iſraelites* with Water in the Wilderneſs, *was Chriſt*[g]: that is, repreſented Him. Every Body ſays, ſuch a Picture is ſuch a Perſon, meaning the Repreſentation of him. Why then may not our Saviour's Words mean ſo too?

[d] 1 Cor. xi. 24. [e] Matth. xxvi. 28. [f] Luke xxii. 20. 1 Cor. xi. 25. [g] 1 Cor. x. 4.

The *Romaniſts* object, that though what repreſents a Thing naturally, or by Virtue of a preceding Inſtitution, may be called by its Name, yet ſuch a Figure as this, in the Words of a new Inſtitution, would not be intelligible [h]. But the Repreſentation here is natural enough: and though the Inſtitution was new, figurative Speech was old. And the Apoſtles would certainly rather interpret their Maſter's Words by a very uſual Figure, than put the abſurdeſt Senſe upon them that could be. They object further, that if He had not meant literally, He would have ſaid, not, *This*, but *This Bread*, is my Body [i]. But we may better argue, that if He had meant literally, He would have ſaid, in the ſtrongeſt Terms, that He did. For there was great Need, ſurely, of ſuch a Declaration. But we acknowledge, that the Bread and Wine are more than a Repreſentation of his Body and Blood: they are the Means, by which the Benefits, ariſing from them, are conveyed to us; and have thence a further Title

[h] Preuves de la Religion, vol. IV. p. 166. [i] Ib. p. 168.

to

to be called by their Name. For ſo the Inſtrument, by which a Prince forgives an Offender, is called his Pardon, becauſe it conveys his Pardon; the Delivery of a Writing is called giving Poſſeſſion of an Eſtate[k]; and a Security for a Sum of Money, is called the Sum itſelf; and is ſo in Virtue and Effect, though it is not in Strictneſs of Speech, and Reality of Subſtance. Again: our Saviour, we own, ſays in St. *John*, that *He is the Bread of Life*; that *his Fleſh is Meat indeed, and his Blood is Drink indeed:* that *whoſo eateth the one and drinketh the other, hath eternal Life*; and that, without doing it, *we have no Life in us*[l]. But this, if underſtood literally, would prove, not that the Bread in the Sacrament was turned into his Fleſh, but that his Fleſh was turned into Bread. And therefore it is not to be underſtood literally, as indeed He himſelf gives Notice: *The Fleſh profiteth nothing: the Words which I ſpeak unto you, they are Spirit and they are Life*[m]: It is not the groſs and literal, but the figurative and ſpiritual, eating and drinking; the partaking by a lively

[k] See Cod. 8. 54. 1. [l] John vi. 48, 53, 54, 55. [m] Ver. 63.

Faith

Faith of an Union with me, and being inwardly nouriſhed by the Fruits of my offering up my Fleſh and Blood for you, that alone can be of Benefit to the Soul.

And as this is plainly the Senſe, in which He ſays, that *his Fleſh is Meat indeed, and his Blood is Drink indeed:* ſo it is the Senſe, in which the latter Part of the third Anſwer of our Catechiſm is to be underſtood; that *the Body and Blood of Chriſt are verily and indeed taken and received by the Faithful in the Lord's Supper:* Words intended to ſhew, that our Church as truly believes the ſtrongeſt Aſſurances of Scripture concerning this Sacrament, as the Church of *Rome* doth; only takes more Care to underſtand them in the right Meaning: which is, that though, in one Senſe, all Communicants equally partake of what Chriſt calls his Body and Blood, that is, the outward Signs of them; yet in a much more important Senſe, *the Faithful* only, the pious and virtuous Receiver, eats his Fleſh and drinks his Blood; ſhares in the Life and Strength derived to Men from his Incarnation and Death; and through Faith

in

in Him, becomes, by a vital Union, one with Him; *a Member*, as St. *Paul* expreſſes it, *of his Fleſh and his Bones*[n]: certainly not in a literal Senſe; which yet the *Romaniſts* might as well aſſert, as that we eat his Fleſh in a literal Senſe; but in a figurative and ſpiritual one. In Appearance, the Sacrament of Chriſt's Death is given to all alike: but *verily and indeed*, in its beneficial Effects, to none beſides the Faithful. Even to the unworthy Communicant He is preſent, as He is wherever we meet together in his Name: but in a better and moſt gracious Senſe, to the worthy Soul; becoming, by the inward Virtue of his Spirit, its Food and Suſtenance.

This real Preſence of Chriſt in the Sacrament, his Church hath always believed. But the monſtrous Notion of his bodily Preſence was ſtarted 700 Years after his Death: and aroſe chiefly from the Indiſcretion of Preachers and Writers of warm Imaginations, who, inſtead of explaining judiciouſly the lofty Figures of Scripture-Language, heightened them, and went be-

[n] Eph. v. 30.

yond

yond them: till both it and they had their Meaning miſtaken moſt aſtoniſhingly. And when once an Opinion had taken Root, that ſeemed to exalt the holy Sacrament ſo much, it eaſily grew and ſpread; and the more for its wonderful Abſurdity, in thoſe ignorant and ſuperſtitious Ages: till at length, 500 Years ago, and 1200 Years after our Saviour's Birth, it was eſtabliſhed for a Goſpel-Truth by the pretended Authority of the *Romiſh* Church. And even this had been tolerable in Compariſon, if they had not added idolatrous Practice to erroneous Belief: worſhipping, on their Knees, a Bit of Bread for the Son of God. Nor are they content to do this themſelves, but with moſt unchriſtian Cruelty, curſe and murder thoſe, who refuſe it.

It is true, we alſo kneel at the Sacrament, as they do: but for a very different Purpoſe: not to acknowledge *any corporal Preſence of Chriſt's natural Fleſh and Blood*; as our Church, to prevent all Poſſibility of Miſconſtruction, expreſsly declares; adding, that *his Body is in Heaven, and not here:* but to worſhip Him, who is every where preſent,

preſent, the inviſible God. And this Poſture of kneeling we by no Means look upon, as in itſelf neceſſary; but as a very becoming Appointment; and very fit to accompany the Prayers and Praiſes, which we offer up at the Inſtant of receiving; and to expreſs that inward Spirit of Piety and Humility, on which our partaking worthily of this Ordinance, and receiving Benefit from it, depend. But the Benefits of the holy Sacrament, and the Qualifications for it, ſhall, God willing, be the Subject of two other Diſcourſes. In the mean Time, *conſider what hath been ſaid; and the Lord give you Underſtanding in all Things*[a].

[a] 2 Tim. ii. 7.

LECTURE XXXVII.

Of the LORD'S SUPPER.

PART II.

THE Doctrine of our Catechiſm, concerning the Lord's Supper, hath been already ſo far explained, as to ſhew you, that it *was ordained,* not *for* the Repetition, but *the continual Remembrance of the Sacrifice of Chriſt*; that *the outward Signs* in it *are Bread and Wine*; both *which the Lord hath commanded to be received* by all Chriſtians: and both which are accordingly received, and not changed and tranſubſtantiated into the real and natural *Body and Blood of Chriſt:* which however *the Faithful,* and they only, do, under this Repreſentation of it, *verily and indeed* receive into a moſt beneficial Union with themſelves;

that is, do *verily and indeed*, by a ſpiritual Connection with their incarnate Redeemer and Head through Faith, partake, in this Ordinance, of that heavenly Favour and Grace, which by offering up his Body and Blood He hath procured for his true Diſciples and Members.

But of *what Benefits* in particular *the Faithful* partake in this Sacrament through the Grace and Favour of God, our Catechiſm teaches in the fourth Anſwer, to which I now proceed: and which tells us it is, *The ſtrengthening and refreſhing of our Souls by the Body and Blood of Chriſt, as our Bodies are by the Bread and Wine*[a]. Now both the Truth and the Manner of this Refreſhment of our Souls will appear by conſidering the Nature of the Sacrament, and the Declarations of Scripture concerning it.

Indeed the due Preparation for it, the Self-examination required in order to it, and the religious Exerciſes which that Ex-

[a] Αλλα πασασθαι ανωχθι θοης επι νηυσιν Αχαιης
Σιτυ και οινοιο· το γαρ μενος εστι και αλκη.
Hom. Il. T. v. 160, 161.

amination

amination will of Courſe point out to us, muſt previouſly be of great Service; as you will ſee, when I come to that Head. And the actual Participation will add further Advantages of unſpeakable Value.

Conſidered as an Act of Obedience to our Saviour's Command, *Do this in Remembrance of me*, it muſt be beneficial to us: for all Obedience will. Conſidered as Obedience to a Command, proceeding principally, if not ſolely, from his mere Will and Pleaſure; it contributes to form us into a very needful, a ſubmiſſive and implicitly dutiful, Temper of Mind. But further: it is the moſt eminent and diſtinguiſhed Act of Chriſtian Worſhip: conſiſting of the devouteſt Thankfulneſs to God for the greateſt Bleſſing, which He ever beſtowed on Man; attended, as it naturally muſt, with earneſt Prayers, that the Gift may avail us, to our ſpiritual and eternal Good. And it is much more likely to affect us very ſtrongly and uſefully, becauſe it expreſſes his Bounty and our Senſe of it, not as our daily Devotions do, in Words alone, but in the leſs common, and therefore more ſolemn Way, of viſible

Signs and Repreſentations: *ſetting forth evidently before our Eyes*, to uſe St. *Paul*'s Language, *Chriſt crucified amongſt us* [b]. This, of Neceſſity, unleſs we are ſtrangely wanting to ourſelves, muſt raiſe the warmeſt Affections of Love, that our Hearts are capable of, to Him who hath given his Son, to Him who hath given Himſelf for us. And as Love is the nobleſt Principle of religious Behaviour, what tends ſo powerfully to animate our Love, muſt in Proportion tend to perfect us in every Branch of Duty, according to the juſt Reaſoning of the ſame Apoſtle: *For the Love of Chriſt conſtraineth us; becauſe we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and He died for all, that they who live, ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves, but unto Him, which died for them, and roſe again* [c] When our Saviour ſaid to his Diſciples, *If ye love me, keep my Commandments* [d]; He knew the Motive was no leſs engaging, than it is reaſonable. And therefore He adds very ſoon after, *If a Man love me, he will keep my Words* [e].

[b] Gal. iii. 1. [c] 2 Cor. v. 15, 16. [d] John xiv. 15. [e] Ver. 23.

But

But this Inſtitution carries in it a yet further Tye upon us; being, as our bleſſed Lord himſelf declared, *the New Teſtament in his Blood*[f]: the Memorial and Acknowledgment of the ſecond Covenant between God and Man, which was founded on his Death; and requires a ſincere Faith and Obedience on our Part, as the Condition of Grace and Mercy on his. *Every one, that nameth the Name of Chriſt*, is bound to *depart from Iniquity*[g]. But the Obligation is redoubled on them who come to his Table as Friends, and *make a Covenant with Him by* partaking of his *Sacrifice*[h]. If theſe live wickedly, it is declaring with the boldeſt Contempt, that they conſider *Chriſt* as *the Miniſter of Sin*[i]; and *count the Blood of the Covenant*, wherewith they profeſs to be *ſanctified, an unholy Thing*[k]. Partaking therefore of this holy Ordinance is renewing, in the moſt awful Manner, our Engagements to the Service which we owe, as well as our Claims to the Favours, that God hath promiſed. It is our Sacrament,

[f] Luke xxii. 20. [g] 2 Tim. ii. 19. [h] Pſalm l. 5.
[i] Gal. ii. 17. [k] Heb. x. 29.

our Oath to be faithful *Soldiers*[l] under *the* great *Captain of our Salvation*[m]: which ſurely we cannot take thus, without being efficaciouſly influenced to the religious Obſervance of it, in every Part of a Chriſtian Life.

But there is one Part eſpecially, and one of the utmoſt Importance, to which this Inſtitution peculiarly binds us, that of univerſal Good-will and Charity. For commemorating, in ſo ſolemn an Action, the Love of Chriſt to us all, cannot but move us to that mutual Imitation of his Love, which, juſt before his appointing this holy Sacrament, He ſo earneſtly and affectionately enjoined his Followers, as the diſtinguiſhing Badge of their Profeſſion. *This is my Commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater Love hath no Man than this, that a Man lay down his Life for his Friends. Ye are my Friends, if ye do whatſoever I command you*[n]. *Hereby ſhall all Men know, that ye are my Diſciples, if ye have Love one to another*[o]. Then beſides;

[l] 2 Tim. ii. 3, 4. [m] Heb. ii. 10. [n] John xv. 12, 13, 14. [o] John xiii. 35.

commemorating his Love jointly, as the Servants of one Maſter, and Members of one Body, partaking of the ſame Covenant of Grace, and the ſame Hope of everlaſting Happineſs, muſt, if we have any Feeling of what we do, incline us powerfully to that reciprocal Union of Hearts, which indeed the very act of communicating ſuggeſts and recommends to us. *For we, being many, are one Bread and one Body: for we are all Partakers of that one Bread* [p].

Another Grace, which this Commemoration of our Saviour's Death peculiarly excites, is Humility of Soul. We acknowledge by it, that we are Sinners; and have no Claim to Pardon or Acceptance, but through his Sacrifice, and his Mediation, whoſe Merits we thus plead, and ſet forth before God. And this Conſideration muſt ſurely diſpoſe us very ſtrongly to a thankful Obſervance of his Commands, to Watchfulneſs over our own Hearts, to Mildneſs towards others. *For we ourſelves alſo have been fooliſh, diſobedient, deceived: and not by Works of Righteouſneſs, which we have*

[p] 1 Cor. x. 17.

done, but according to his Mercy, God hath saved us, which He ſhed on us abundantly through Chriſt Jeſus our Saviour [q].

And as this Sacrament will naturally ſtrengthen us in all theſe good Diſpoſitions, we cannot doubt, but God will add his Bleſſing to the Uſe of ſuch proper Means, eſpecially being appointed Means. For ſince he hath threatned Puniſhments to unworthy Receivers, He will certainly beſtow Rewards on worthy ones. Our Saviour hath told us, that *his Fleſh is Meat indeed, and his Blood is Drink indeed* [r]: Suſtenance and Refreſhment to the Souls of Men. When He bleſſed the Bread and Wine, He undoubtedly prayed, and not in vain, that they might be effectual for the good Purpoſes, which He deſigned ſhould be attained by this holy Rite. And St. *Paul* hath told us, if it needs, more expreſsly, that *the Cup, which we bleſs, is the Communion*, that is, the Communication to us, *of the Blood of Chriſt; and the Bread, which we break, of the Body of Chriſt* [s]: that is, of a ſaving Union with Him, and therefore of

[q] Tit. iii. 3, 5, 6. [r] John vi. 55. [s] 1 Cor. x. 16.

the

the Benefits procured to us by his Death; which are, Forgiveneſs of our Offences; for He hath ſaid, *This is my Blood of the New Teſtament, which is ſhed for the Remiſſion of Sins*[t]: Increaſe of the gracious Influences of the Holy Ghoſt; for the Apoſtle hath ſaid, plainly ſpeaking of this Ordinance, that *we are all made to drink into one Spirit*[u]: and everlaſting Life; for *whoſo eateth his Fleſh, and drinketh his Blood, dwelleth in Chriſt, and Chriſt in him, and He will raiſe him up at the laſt Day*[w]. Whence a Father of the apoſtolic Age, *Ignatius*, calls the Euchariſt, *the Medicine of Immortality; a Preſervative, that we ſhould not die, but live for ever in Jeſus Chriſt*[x].

But then what hath been already hinted to you muſt be always carefully obſerved; that theſe Benefits are to be expected only from partaking worthily of it: *for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily*, St. *Paul* hath told us, *is guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord*[y], that is, guilty of Irreverence to-

[t] Matth. xxvi. 28. [u] 1 Cor. xii. 13. [w] John vi. 54, 56. [x] Ign. ad Eph. c. 20. See Waterland on the Euchariſt, p. 217. [y] 1 Cor. xi. 27.

wards it, and *eateth and drinketh Judgment to himself*[z]. Our Translation indeed hath it, *Damnation to himself*. But there is so great Danger of this last Word being understood here in too strong a Sense, that it would be much safer, and exacter, to translate it, (as it is often translated elsewhere, and once in a few Verses after this Passage, and from what follows ought undeniably to be translated here) *Judgment* or *Condemnation*: not to certain Punishment in another Life, but to such Marks of God's Displeasure as He sees fit; which will be confined to this World, or extended to the next, as the Case requires. For *receiving unworthily* may, according to the Kind and Degree of it, be either a very great Sin, or comparatively a small one. But all dangerous Kinds and Degrees may with Ease be avoided, if we only take Care to come to the Sacrament with proper Dispositions, and, which will follow of Course, to behave at it in a proper Manner.

[z] 1 Cor. xi. 29.

To

To these Dispositions our Catechism proceeds. But more is needful to be known concerning them than can well be laid before you now. Therefore I shall conclude at present with desiring you to observe, that no Unworthiness, but our own, can possibly endanger us, or prevent our receiving Benefit. Doubtless it would both be more pleasing and more edifying, to come to *the Table of the Lord*[a] in Company with such only as are qualified for a Place at it: and they, who are unqualified, ought, when they properly can, to be restrained from it. But we have neither Direction nor Permission to stay away, because others come who should not: nor can they ever be so effectually excluded, but that *Tares* will be mixed *among the Wheat:* and attempting to *root them up* may often be more hurtful than *letting both grow together till the Harvest*[b]. Nay, should even *the Stewards* and Dispensers *of Gods Mysteries*[c] be unholy Persons, though it be a grievous Temptation to others to *abhor the Offering*

[a] 1 Cor. x. 21.
[b] Matth. xiii. 28—31.
[c] 1 Cor. iv. 2.

of

of the Lord[d], yet that is holy ſtill. *They ſhall bear their Iniquity:* but notwithſtanding, *all the Promiſes* of all God's Ordinances *are yea and Amen*, ſure and certain, *in Jeſus Chriſt*[e], to as many as *worſhip Him in Spirit and in Truth*[f].

[d] 1 Sam. ii. 17. [e] 2 Cor. i. 20. [f] John iv. 23.

LECTURE XXXVIII.

Of the LORD'S SUPPER.

PART III.

WHAT Qualifications and Diſpoſitions are *required* of them who come to the Lord's Supper, the Scripture hath not particularly expreſſed: for they are eaſily collected from the Nature of this Ordinance. But our Catechiſm, in its fifth and laſt Anſwer concerning it, hath reduced them very juſtly to three: Repentance, Faith, and Charity.

I. *That we repent us truly of our former Sins, ſtedfaſtly purpoſing to lead a new Life.* For as we are by Nature prone to Sin; and the youngeſt and beſt among us have in more Inſtances than a few been guilty of it: the leſs the better: ſo in Chriſtianity,

Repentance is the Foundation of every Thing. Now the Sorrow that we ought to feel for the leaſt Sin, muſt be a very ſerious one: and for greater Offences in Proportion deeper. But the Vehemence and Paſſionateneſs of Grief will, on every Occaſion, and particularly on this, be extremely different in different Perſons. And therefore all, that God expects, is a ſincere, though it may be a calm, Concern, for every paſt Fault, of which we are conſcious, and for the Multitudes, which we have either not obſerved or forgotten. And this Concern muſt proceed from a Senſe of Duty, and produce the good Effects of an humble Confeſſion to Him in all Caſes, and to our Fellow-Creatures, in all Caſes needful; of Reſtitution for the Injuries that we have done, ſo far as it is poſſible; and of a ſettled Reſolution to amend our Hearts and Lives, wherever it is wanting. More than this we cannot do; and leſs than this God cannot accept. For it would be giving us a Licenſe to diſobey Him, if He allowed us to come to his Table, and profeſs to *have Fellowſhip with Him*, while we *walked in Dark-*

Darkneſs[a]. Mere Infirmities indeed, and undeſigned Frailties, provided we ſtrive againſt them with any good Degree of honeſt Care, and humble ourſelves in the Divine Preſence for them, ſo far as we are ſenſible of them, will not provoke God to reject us, as unworthy Receivers, though in Strictneſs, we are all unworthy. For if ſuch Failures as theſe made Perſons unfit, nobody could be fit. And therefore they will be no Excuſe for omitting what Chriſt hath commanded: nor can be any Reaſon why we ſhould not do it with Comfort.

But whoever lives in any wilful Sin, cannot ſafely come to the holy Sacrament: nor, which I beg you to obſerve, can he ſafely ſtay away. For, as the Hypocriſy of profeſſing Amendment falſely at God's Table is a great Sin; ſo the Profaneneſs of turning our Backs upon it, becauſe we will not amend, is to the full as great a one: and it is the mereſt Folly in the World to chuſe either, as the ſafer Way; for a wicked Perſon can be ſafe no Way. But let him reſolve to quit his Wickedneſs: and when

[a] 1 John i. 6.

he

he is thoroughly ſure, ſo far as he can judge from a competent Experience, that he hath reſolved upon it effectually, then he may as ſafely receive as he can ſay his Prayers. And ſuch a one ſhould come, not with ſervile Fear, as to a hard Maſter; but with willing Duty, as to a merciful Father. Nay, ſhould he afterwards break his Reſolutions, though doubtleſs it would be the juſteſt Cauſe of heavy Grief, yet it would not prove that he received unworthily, but only that he hath behaved unworthily ſince he received. And the Thing for him to do is, to lament his Fault with deeper Contrition, renew his good Purpoſes more firmly, pray for Help from above with more Earneſtneſs, watch over himſelf with more prudent Care: then go again to God's Altar, thankfully commemorate his pardoning Love, and claim anew the Benefit of his gracious Covenant. Following this Courſe honeſtly, he will aſſuredly gain Ground. And therefore ſuch, as do not gain Ground, do not follow it honeſtly: but allow themſelves to go round in a Circle of ſinning, then repenting as they call it, and communicating, then ſinning

ning again: as if every Communion did of Courſe wipe off the old Score, and ſo they might begin a new one without Scruple: which is the abſurdeſt, the moſt irreligious, the moſt fatal Imagination, that can be.

II. The next Thing, required of them who come to the Lord's Supper, is *a lively Faith in God's Mercy through Chriſt, with a thankful Remembrance of his Death.* And the Faith neceſſary is a ſettled Perſuaſion, that, for the Sake of the meritorious Obedience and Sufferings of our bleſſed Redeemer, God will pardon true Penitents; together with a comfortable Truſt that we, as ſuch, have an Intereſt in his Merits. But here again you muſt obſerve, that different Perſons may have very different Degrees of this Perſuaſion and Truſt. Some may be *weak in Faith*[b]; may have Cauſe to ſay with Him in the Goſpel of St. *Mark*, *Lord, I believe; help thou mine Unbelief*[c]; and yet their Prayers, like His, may be graciouſly heard. Others may be *ſtrong*[d], and *increaſe*[e], till they *abound in Faith*[f].

[b] Rom. xiv. 1. [c] Mark ix. 24. [d] Rom. iv. 20.
[e] Luke xvii. 5. [f] Col. ii. 7.

And

And such have great Reason to be thankful to God for themselves: but surely they ought never to judge hardly of their Brethren, who have not advanced so far. The Rule of judging, both in the Catechism and the Scripture, is not by the Positiveness, but the Liveliness, of our Faith; that is, the Fruits of a Christian Life, which it produces: for *Faith without Works is dead*[t]. If we cannot shew the Evidence of these, the highest Confidence will do us no Good: and if we can, we need have no Doubts concerning our spiritual Condition; and though we have ever so many, provided we perceive no sufficient Reason for them, we may celebrate this holy Ordinance very safely. For such Weaknesses in our natural Temper and Spirits are no Way inconsistent with having, in our fixed and deliberate Judgment, that *full Trust in God's Mercy*, which the Communion-Service requires: and we cannot take a more likely Method, either to perfect our Repentance or to strengthen our Faith, than receiving the Sacrament frequently.

[t] Jam. ii. 17.

Our

Our Catechiſm teaches further, that our Faith in Chriſt muſt be accompanied *with a thankful Remembrance of his Death*. And ſurely, if we believe, that He died to ſave us, we muſt be thankful for it. But then the Meaſure of our Thankfulneſs muſt be taken from the Goodneſs and Conſtancy of its Effects, not from that ſenſible Warmth and Fervency, which we cannot, ordinarily ſpeaking, feel ſo ſtrongly in ſpiritual Things as in temporal; and of which bad Perſons may at Times have very much, and good Perſons little. For that is the true Thankfulneſs, which produces Love. And *this is the Love of God, that we keep his Commandments*[h].

But there is one Commandment, as I have ſhewn you, peculiarly connected with this Ordinance. And therefore our Catechiſm ſpecifies it ſeparately, and in expreſs Terms, by requiring,

III. That we *be in Charity with all Men*. For we can have no Share in the Love of our Creator, our Redeemer, and Sanctifier, unleſs, in Imitation of it, we love one an-

[h] 1 John v. 3.

other: and, as the Goodneſs of God is univerſal, ſo muſt ours be too. Receiving the holy Communion was indeed intended to increaſe the Degree of it: but the Reality we muſt have, before we are worthy to receive. And we muſt ſhew it is real, by *forgiving them who treſpaſs againſt us*: by aſſiſting, as far as can be reaſonably expected, thoſe who need Aſſiſtance in any Kind; by our hearty Prayers for thoſe, whom we can help no other Way; by faithfully performing the Duties of our ſeveral Stations and Relations in Life; and by Condeſcenſion, Mildneſs, and Humanity towards every Perſon, as Occaſion offers: all which Duties, and particularly that of Forgiveneſs, have been explained to you in their proper Places.

Theſe then being the Diſpoſitions requiſite for receiving the holy Sacrament, as indeed they are for obtaining eternal Happineſs; we are all greatly concerned to examine ourſelves, whether we have them or not: and ſhould have been concerned to do it, though this Ordinance had never been appointed. But we are now more eſpecially bound to it with a View to this Ordinance; both

both from the Nature of it, and from St. *Paul*'s positive Injunction: *Let a Man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup*[1].

The principal Subjects of our Examination are comprehended under the three Heads just now mentioned. But as to any particular Method to be taken, or Time to be spent in it, or in any further Preparation subsequent to it, we have no Command: it is left to every one's Prudence and voluntary Piety. They who live in a constant Practice of Religion and Virtue, are always fit for the Sacrament; and may, if the Call be sudden, by reflecting for a few Moments, sufficiently know that they are fit. Persons, who live in any Sin, may as easily and quickly know that they are not. And it is only in doubtful Cases, that any Length of Consideration is necessary to satisfy us about this Matter. But it must be extremely useful for all Persons, not only to be attentive to their Ways constantly, but to look back upon them frequently; much more frequently than almost any one receives

[1] 1 Cor xi. 28.

the Sacrament. And as Things, which have no certain Seaſon fixed for them, are very apt to be neglected; we ſhould fix upon this, as one certain Seaſon for as particular an Inſpection into the State of our Hearts and Lives as we can well make, and can hope to be the better for; joining with it ſuitable Meditations, Reſolutions, and Devotions. But then in the whole of this Work we muſt be careful, neither to hurry over any Part thoughtleſsly, nor lengthen it wearisomely. And in our Examination we muſt be eſpecially careful, neither to flatter nor yet to affright ourſelves: but obſerve impartially what is right in us, thank God, and take the Comfort of it: acknowledge what is wrong, beg Pardon, and amend it. For without Amendment, being ever ſo ſorry will avail nothing.

The laſt Thing to be mentioned in Relation to this holy Sacrament, is our Behaviour at it, which ought to be very ſerious and reverent; ſuch as may ſhew, in the propereſt Manner, that, to uſe the Apoſtle's Words, we *diſcern* or diſtinguiſh

the Lord's Body[k]; look on the Action of receiving it, as one of no common Nature, but as the religious Memorial of our bleſſed Saviour's dying for us, and by his Death eſtabliſhing with us a Covenant of Pardon, Grace, and everlaſting Felicity, on God's Part, and of Faith and Holineſs, on ours. With this important Conſideration, we ſhould endeavour to affect our Hearts deeply and tenderly: yet neither to force our Minds, if we could, into immoderate Tranſports, by which we ſhall only bewilder and loſe, inſtead of benefiting, ourſelves; nor expreſs even what we ought to feel, by any improper Singularities of Geſture; nor yet be dejected, if we have leſs Feeling, and even leſs Attention to the Service, than we have Reaſon to wiſh. For ſuch Things may be, in a great Meaſure at leaſt, natural and unavoidable. Or, ſuppoſing them Faults; they may be, and often are, the Faults of ſuch Perſons, as notwithſtanding are, on the whole, very worthy Communicants. They may be, for a Time, uſeful Means of keeping us humble and watch-

[k] 1 Cor. xi. 29.

ful: after that, God may deliver us from them; and ſhould we continue all our Lives afflicted with them, it would never hinder our receiving all the neceſſary Benefits of this Ordinance.

God grant that both it, and all his other gracious Inſtitutions, may contribute effectually to *build us up on our moſt holy Faith* in a ſuitable Practice, that ſo we may ever *keep ourſelves in the Love of God*; and on good Grounds *look for the Mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, unto eternal Life*[1].

[1] Jude, ver. 20, 21.

LECTURE XXXIX.

The Concluſion.

HAVING now, through God's Mercy, carried on theſe Lectures to the End of the Catechiſm, and in ſome Meaſure explained to you every Part of Chriſtian Faith and Duty comprehended in it, I have only one Inſtruction more to add, but the moſt important of all for you to remember and conſider well: that, *if ye know theſe Things, happy are ye, if ye do them*[a]; and miſerable are ye, if ye do them not.

We all know indeed by Nature, in a great Degree, what Manner of Perſons we ought to be in this World: and therefore, if we fail of being ſuch, are in a great Degree inexcuſable. For how little Teaching ſoever ſome may have had; yet our Sa-

[a] John xiii. 17.

viour's home Queſtion will reach even them: *Yea, and why even of yourſelves judge ye not, what is right*[b]? *The Work of the Law is written in the Hearts* of Men, *their Conſcience alſo bearing Witneſs*[c]. Being reaſonable Creatures, we are evidently bound to govern our Paſſions, Appetites, Fancies, and whole Behaviour, by the Rules of Reaſon. And who doth not ſee, that Sobriety, Temperance and Modeſty, are Things perfectly reaſonable; and Exceſs, and Diſſoluteneſs, and Indecency, miſchievous and ſhameful? Being ſocial Creatures, we are as evidently bound to whatever will make Society happy. And ſince we are very ſenſible, that others ought to treat us with Juſtice and Kindneſs, peaceably mind their own Buſineſs, and diligently provide for their own Maintenance; we cannot but be ſenſible, that we ought to do the ſame Things. Then laſtly, being Creatures capable of knowing our Creator, who is *not far from every one of us; for in Him we live, and move, and have our Being*[d]: it follows very clearly, that we are not to forget Him, but worſhip and obey Him

[b] Luke xii. 57. [c] Rom. ii. 15. [d] Acts xvii. 27, 28.

as

as the almighty, all-wiſe, and all-good Maker and Lord of the Univerſe; acknowledge our Dependance on Him, be thankful to Him for his Mercies, and reſign ourſelves to his Diſpoſal.

Thus much, one ſhould have thought, all Men muſt have known, without ſupernatural Teaching: and certainly they might; and therefore are juſtly blameable and puniſhable, if they do not. But ſtill it hath appeared in Fact, that wherever Men have been left to their own Reaſon, neither every one hath taught himſelf, nor the wiſer Part of the World taught the reſt, even theſe plain Things; ſo as to produce any ſteady Regard to them, as Duties, or even any ſettled Conviction of them, as Truths. And for Want of it, Sin and Miſery have prevailed every where. Men have made others and themſelves wretched in numberleſs Ways: and often doubly wretched by the Reflections of their own Hearts; knowing they had done ill, and not knowing how to be ſure of Pardon.

Foreſeeing from Eternity theſe dreadful Conſequences of human Ignorance and Wicked-

Wickedneſs, God provided ſuitable Remedies of Inſtruction and Grace: which he notified to the World from Time to Time, as his own unſearchable Wiſdom ſaw would be fitteſt; increaſing the Light gradually till it ſhone out in the full Day of Chriſtianity. But Revelation, as well as Reaſon, hath been given in vain to a great Part of Mankind. The Propagation of it through the Earth hath been ſtrangely neglected: in many Places, where it hath been received, it hath been loſt again: and in too many, where it is retained, it is grievouſly corrupted and obſcured. Without Queſtion we ought to judge as charitably as we can of all who are in any of theſe Conditions: but at the ſame Time we ought, from the Bottom of our Hearts, to thank God that none of them is our own. Undoubtedly He is and will be gracious to all his Creatures, as far as they are fit Objects: but it is *the Riches of his Grace*[e], that He hath beſtowed on us: and as, with Juſtice, He might diſpoſe of his own free Gifts as He pleaſed; ſo, in Mercy, He hath conferred

[e] Eph. i. 7. ii. 7.

a large

a large Proportion of them on this Nation and Age. Bleſſings, that are common and familiar, though indeed much the greater for that, are uſually but little regarded. And thus, amongſt other Things, the Opportunities that we enjoy of religious Knowledge, it may be feared, are often very lightly eſteemed. But would we reflect, how much leſs Means of being acquainted with the Duties of this Life, and the Rewards of another, not only the unenlightened Heathen World, but the Jews, the People of God, had formerly; and much the greateſt Part even of Chriſtians have had for Numbers of ſucceſſive Generations, and have ſtill, than We: it would make us feel, that our Saviour's Words belong to us alſo: *Verily, I ſay unto you, that many Prophets and righteous Men have deſired to ſee thoſe Things which ye ſee, and have not ſeen them: and to hear thoſe Things which ye hear, and have not heard them. But bleſſed are your Eyes, for they ſee; and your Ears, for they hear* [f].

But then, and, for the Sake of God and our Souls, let us obſerve it; if *ſeeing we ſee*

[f] Matth. xiii. 16, 17.

not,

not, and hearing we hear not [g], to the only good Purpoſe of Life, that of becoming in Heart and in Practice ſuch as we ought; *better had it been for us, not to have known the Way of Righteouſneſs, than, after we have known it, to turn from the holy Commandment delivered unto us* [h]. *For unto whomſoever much is given, of him ſhall much be required. The Servant, that knew his Lord's Will, and prepared not himſelf, neither did according to his Will, ſhall be beaten with many Stripes: he that knew it not, with few* [i]. But take Notice; he that, in Compariſon with others, may be ſaid not to know the Will of God, knows enough of it however to ſubject him, if he fails of doing it, to future Puniſhment; *to be beaten with Stripes.* Not even a heathen Sinner therefore ſhall eſcape intirely by his Ignorance: much leſs will that Plea excuſe a Chriſtian: but leaſt of all can thoſe Chriſtians hope for Mercy, who hear the Word of God preached to them weekly; have it in their Hands, and may read it daily; and yet tranſgreſs it. *Verily I ſay unto you, it ſhall be more tolerable for Sodom*

[g] Matth. xiii. 13. [h] 2 Pet. ii. 21. [i] Luke xii. 47, 48.

and

and Gomorrha, in the Day of Judgment [k], than for ſuch Perſons.

Let no one argue from hence, that Knowledge then is no Bleſſing. For the more we know of our Maker and our Duty, the better we are qualified to be good in this World, and happy in the next. And we can never be worſe for it, unleſs we will, by making either no Uſe or a bad Uſe of it. Nor let any one imagine, that, though we need not be the worſe for our Knowledge, yet ſince we may, Ignorance is the ſafer Choice; as what will excuſe our Sins, if not intirely, yet in a great Meaſure. But let us all remember, it is not pretended, but real, Ignorance; nor even that, unleſs we could not help it, that will be any Plea in our Favour. Wilful, or even careleſs Ignorance, is a great Sin itſelf; and therefore can never procure us Pardon for the other Sins which it may occaſion. What ſhould any of us think of a Servant who kept out of the Way of receiving his Maſter's Orders, purpoſely becauſe he had no Mind to do them? Nay, ſuppoſing him

[k] Mark vi. 11.

only

only through Negligence not to underſtand the Buſineſs that he was required to learn and follow: would this juſtify him? Would it not be ſaid, that what he might and ought to have known, it was his own Fault if he did not know? And what do we think of God, if we hope to impoſe on Him with Pleas that will not paſs amongſt ourſelves?

Fix it in your Hearts then: the firſt indiſpenſable Duty of Man is, to learn the Will of his Maker; the next, to do it: and nothing can excuſe you from either. Attend therefore diligently on all ſuch Means of Inſtruction, as God's Providence gives you: eſpecially the publick Inſtruction of the Church, which, having expreſsly appointed for you, he will aſſuredly bleſs to you; provided you obſerve our Saviour's moſt important Direction, *Take heed how ye hear* [l]. For on that it depends, whether the preaching of the Goſpel ſhall be *Life or Death to you* [m]. One it muſt be: and theſe very Lectures, amongſt other Things, which have been truly intended for your eternal

[l] Luke viii. 18. [m] 2 Cor. ii. 16.

Good,

Good, will prove, if you apply them not to that End, what God forbid they ſhould, a Means of increaſing your future Condemnation. Be intreated therefore to conſider very ſeriouſly what you are taught; for be there ever ſo much of the Weakneſs of Man in it, there is the Power of God unto Salvation, unleſs you hinder it yourſelves. Never deſpiſe then the meaneſt of your Inſtructors; and never think of admiring the ableſt: but remember that your Buſineſs is, neither to applaud nor cenſure other Perſons Performances; but to improve your own Hearts, and mend your own Lives. Barely coming and hearing is nothing. Barely being pleaſed and moved and affected is nothing. It is only minding and doing the whole of your Duty, not ſome Part of it alone, that is any Thing.

Knowing the Words of your Catechiſm is of no other Uſe, than to preſerve in your Memories the Things which thoſe Words expreſs. Knowing the Meaning of your Catechiſm ever ſo well, in every Part, is of no other Uſe than to put you on the Performance of what it teaches. And per-

forming ſome Things ever ſo conſtantly or zealouſly, will not avail, without a faithful Endeavour to perform every Thing. Have it always in your Thoughts therefore, that Practice, uniform Practice, is the one Thing needful. Your Knowledge may be very low and Imperfect, your Faith not very clear and diſtinct: but however poorly you are capable of furniſhing your Heads; if your Hearts and Lives be good, all is well.

But here, I pray you, obſerve further, that as it is not in underſtanding and believing, ſo it is not in Devotion merely, that Religion conſiſts. The common Duties of common Life make far the greateſt Part of what our Maker expects of us. To be honeſt and ſober, and modeſt and humble, and good-tempered and mild, and induſtrious and uſeful in our ſeveral Stations, are Things to which all Perſons are as much bound as they can be to any Thing: and when they proceed from a Principle of Conſcience towards God, and are offered up to Him, as our bounden Duty, through Jeſus Chriſt; are as true and as acceptable a Service to Him, as either our Attendance at Church,

or

or our Prayers in Retirement at Home. And they, who abound in theſe latter Duties, and neglect any of the former, only diſgrace Religion, and deceive themſelves.

Yet underſtand me not, I beg you, to ſpeak ſlightly of Devotion, either private or publick. On the contrary, I recommend both to you moſt earneſtly: for our immediate Duty to God is the higheſt of all Duties, *the firſt and great Commandment*[n] of natural Religion: and the Payment of due and diſtinct Regards to the Father almighty, to his bleſſed Son, and holy Spirit, of Courſe obtains an equal Rank in Revelation. In particular I recommend it to you, not to omit coming to Evening-Prayers, becauſe now theſe Lectures will be diſcontinued. Joining in God's Worſhip, and hearing his holy Word read to you, is always a ſufficient, and ſhould always be the principal, Motive to bring you. For *neither is he that planteth, any Thing; neither he that watereth: but God, that giveth the Increaſe*[o]. And we may be ſure He will give it to

[n] Matth. xxii. 38. [o] 1 Cor. iii. 7.

thoſe, who attend on his Ordinances with pious Minds: and we may juſtly expect, that He will withhold it from thoſe, who, inſtead of coming becauſe it is their Duty, come to hear this or that Man diſcourſe.

But then I muſt beſeech you to obſerve at the ſame Time; that as neither Piety without Morals, nor Morals without Piety, nor heathen Piety without Chriſtian, will ſuffice; ſo neither will the outward Acts of any Thing, without an inward Principle of it; and the true Principle is a reverent Eſteem and Love of God. Other Inducements may allowably be joined with this: but if this be not alſo joined with them, what we do may be Prudence, may be Virtue, but is not Religion; and therefore, however right, ſo far as it goes, doth not go far enough to intitle us to Reward, or even to ſecure us from Puniſhment; which nothing can more juſtly deſerve, than to have little or no Senſe of filial Affection to our heavenly Father, and of thankful Love to our crucified Redeemer and gracious Sanctifier, who have the higheſt Right to the utmoſt Regard that our Souls are capable of feeling.

You

You muſt reſolve therefore, not only to be Chriſtians externally in your Lives, but internally in your Hearts. And, let me remind you further, you will reſolve on neither to good Purpoſe, if you truſt to yourſelves alone for the Performance. You will contrive, perhaps, great Schemes of Amendment and Goodneſs; but you will execute very little of them: or you will do a good deal, it may be, in ſome Particulars; and leave others, equally neceſſary, undone: or you will go on a while; and then fall, when you thought you were ſureſt of ſtanding: or what ſeeming Progreſs ſoever you make, you will ruin it all, by thinking too highly of yourſelves for it: or ſome Way or another you will certainly fail; unleſs the Grace of God enable you, firſt to be deeply ſenſible of your own Guilt and Weakneſs; then to lay hold, by Faith in Chriſt, on his promiſed Mercy and Help; in the Strength of that Help to obey his Commands; and after all to know, that you are ſtill *unprofitable Servants* [p]. Now this Grace you may certainly have, in whatever Mea-

[p] Luke xvii. 10.

ſure you want it, by earneſt Prayer for it, humble Dependance upon it, and ſuch honeſt and diligent Uſe of the lower Degrees of it, as He hath promiſed to reward with higher Degrees: and you can have it no other Way. If ever therefore, when we exhort you to Duties, moral or religious, we omit to mention the great Duty of applying for Strength from above to be given you, not for your own Sakes, but that of your bleſſed Redeemer, in order to practiſe them; it is by no Means becauſe we think ſuch Application unneceſſary; but becauſe we hope you know it ſo well to be abſolutely neceſſary, that we need not always remind you of it. But if we are, at any Time, wanting to you in this Reſpect, or any other; be not you therefore wanting to yourſelves; but *work out your own Salvation* from this Motive, which alone will procure you Succeſs, that *God worketh in you both to will and to do* [q]. *And I pray God to ſanctify you wholly, and preſerve your whole Spirit, Soul, and Body, blameleſs, unto the Coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt* [r].

[q] Phil. ii. 12, 13. [r] 1 Theſſ. v. 23.

Having ſaid thus much to you all in general, I deſire you, Children, to take Notice of what I am going to ſay, in the laſt Place, to you in particular. Your Condition is of the lower Kind: but your Inſtruction hath been better than many of your Superiors have had. If therefore your Behaviour be bad, your Condemnation will be heavy: and if it be good, you may be to the full as happy, in this World and the next, as if you were of ever ſo high Rank. For true Happineſs comes only from doing our Duty; and none will ever come from tranſgreſſing it: but, whatever Pleaſure or Profit Sin may promiſe, they will ſoon turn into Pain and Loſs. Remember therefore, as long as you live, what you have been taught here. Remember particularly the Anſwers to thoſe two main Queſtions: *What is thy Duty towards God*; and, *What is thy Duty towards thy Neighbour*. And be aſſured, that unleſs you practiſe both, when you go hence to Services and Apprenticeſhips, all the Money and Labour, that hath been ſpent on you, will be ſpent in vain; you will be a Diſ-

grace to the Education and Teaching that you have had; you will probably be very miſerable here, and certainly ſo for ever hereafter. But, if you practiſe both, you will make an honeſt and grateful Return for the Kindneſs that you have received from your Benefactors; which I hope you will never forget, but imitate, if God enables you to do it: you will be loved of your Maker and Fellow-Creatures; you will live in Peace of Mind, you will die with Comfort, and be received into everlaſting Bliſs.

Think then, I intreat and charge you, ſeriouſly and often of theſe Things. And, to remind yourſelves of them more effectually, be diligent in reading ſuch good Books as are given you at your leaving School, or otherwiſe put into your Hands: be conſtant in coming to Church, on the Lord's Days at leaſt: ſuch of you, as go away before you are confirmed, take the firſt Opportunity, after you are fourteen, to apply to your Miniſter, wherever you are, that you may be well inſtructed for that holy Ordinance, and then admitted to it. Within a

reaſonable Time after this, prepare yourſelves, and deſire him and your Friends to aſſiſt in preparing you, to receive the Lord's Supper: concerning which you have heard very lately, how expreſsly it is required of all Chriſtians, (a Name that comprehends young as well as old) for the Means of improving them in every Thing that is good. And may God give his Grace to you and to us all, that by the Help of thoſe Means, with which He hath ſo plentifully favoured us, we may each of us improve daily in the Knowledge of his Truth, and the Love of our Duty, *till at length we come unto a perfect Man, unto the Meaſure of the Stature of the Fullneſs of Chriſt* [s].

[s] Eph. iv. 13.

A

SERMON

ON

CONFIRMATION.

A

SERMON

ON

CONFIRMATION.

Acts viii. 17.

Then laid they their Hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghoſt.

THE Hiſtory, to which theſe Words belong, is this. *Philip* the Deacon, ordained at the ſame Time with St. *Stephen*, had converted and baptized the People of *Samaria:* which the Apoſtles at *Jeruſalem* hearing, ſent down to them *Peter* and *John*, two of their own Body; who by Prayer, accompanied with Impoſition of Hands, obtained for them a greater Degree, than they had yet received, of the ſacred Influences of the Divine Spirit: which undoubtedly was done on their ſignifying in ſome Manner, ſo as to be underſtood, their Adherence to the Engagement, into which they had entered at their Baptiſm.

From this and the like Inſtances of the Practice of the Apoſtles, is derived, what Biſhops,

Biſhops, their Succeſſors, though every Way beyond Compariſon inferior to them, have practiſed ever ſince, and which we now call Confirmation. Preaching was common to all Ranks of Miniſters: baptizing was performed uſually by the lower Rank: but, perhaps to maintain a due Subordination, it was reſerved to the higheſt, by Prayer and laying on of Hands, to communicate further Meaſures of the Holy Ghoſt. It was indeed peculiar to the Apoſtles, that on their Interceſſion, his extraordinary and miraculous Gifts were beſtowed: which continued in the Church no longer, than the Need of them did; nor can we ſuppoſe, that all were Partakers of them. But unqueſtionably by their Petitions they procured, for every ſincere Convert, a much more valuable, though leſs remarkable Bleſſing, of univerſal and perpetual Neceſſity, his ordinary and ſaving Graces.

For theſe therefore, after their Example, truſting that God will have Regard, not to our Unworthineſs, but to the Purpoſes of Mercy which He hath appointed us to ſerve, we interceed now, when Perſons take

take upon themſelves the Vow of their Baptiſm. For this good End being now come amongſt you, though I doubt not but your Miniſters have given you proper Inſtructions on the Occaſion; yet I am deſirous of adding ſomewhat further, which may not only acquaint more fully thoſe, who are eſpecially concerned, with the Nature of what they are about to do, but remind you all of the Obligations, which Chriſtianity lays upon you. And I cannot perform it better, than by explaining to you the Office of Confirmation, to which you may turn in your Prayer Books, where it ſtands immediately after the Catechiſm.

There you will ſee, in the firſt Place, a Preface, directed to be read: in which, Notice is given, that *for the more edifying of ſuch as ſhall receive Confirmation*, it ſhall be adminiſtered to none but thoſe, *who can anſwer to the Queſtions of the Catechiſm* preceding: that ſo *Children* may *come to Years of* ſome *Diſcretion*, and *learn what* the *Promiſe* made for them *in Baptiſm* was, before they are called upon to *ratify and confirm it before the Church with their own Conſent*, and

and to engage *that they will evermore obſerve it.*

Prayers may be offered up for Infants with very good Effect. Promiſes may be made in their Name by ſuch as are authoriſed to act for them: eſpecially when the Things promiſed are for their Intereſt, and will be their Duty; which is the Caſe of thoſe in Baptiſm. But no Perſons ought to make Promiſes for themſelves, till they reaſonably well underſtand the Nature of them, and are capable of forming ſerious Purpoſes. Therefore, in the preſent Caſe, being able to ſay the Words of their Catechiſm is by no Means enough, without a competent general Knowledge of their Meaning, and Intention of behaving as it requires them; which doubtleſs they are ſuppoſed to have at the ſame Time. And if they have not; making a Profeſſion of it, is declaring with their Mouths what they feel not in their Hearts at the Inſtant, and will much leſs reflect upon afterwards: it is hoping to pleaſe God by the empty outward Performance of a religious Rite, from which if they had been withheld, till they

they were duly qualified, their Souls might have been affected, and their Conduct influenced by it, as long as they lived.

Therefore I hope and beg, that neither Miniſters nor Parents will be too eager for bringing Children very early to Confirmation: but firſt teach them carefully, to know their Duty ſufficiently, and reſolve upon the Practice of it heartily; then introduce them to this Ordinance: which they ſhall not fail to have Opportunities of attending in their Neighbourhood, from Time to Time, ſo long as God continues my Life and Strength.

But as there are ſome too young for Confirmation, ſome alſo may be thought too old: eſpecially, if they have received the holy Sacrament without it. Now there are not indeed all the ſame Reaſons for the Confirmation of ſuch, as of others: nor hath the Church, I believe, determined any Thing about their Caſe, as it might be thought unlikely to happen. But ſtill, ſince it doth happen too frequently, that Perſons were not able, or have neglected, to apply for this Purpoſe: ſo whenever they apply,

as

as by doing it they expreſs a Deſire to *fulfill all Righteouſneſs* [a]; and may certainly receive Benefit, both from the Profeſſion and the Prayers, appointed in the Office: my Judgment is, that they ſhould not be rejected, but encouraged.

Only I muſt intreat you to obſerve, that when you take thus on yourſelves the Engagement of leading a Chriſtian Life, you are to take it once for all; and no more to think of ever being confirmed a ſecond Time, than of being baptized a ſecond Time.

After directing, Who are to be confirmed; the Office goes on to direct, How they are to be confirmed. And here, the Biſhop is to begin with aſking every one of thoſe, who offer themſelves, whether they *do, in the Preſence of God and of the Congregation, renew in their own Perſons the ſolemn Vow of their Baptiſm; acknowledging themſelves bound to believe and to perform all thoſe Things, which their God-Fathers and God-Mothers then undertook for them.* On which,

[a] Matth. iii. 15.

they

they are each of them to anſwer, with an audible Voice, *I do.*

Now the Things, promiſed in our Name, were, to renounce whatever God hath forbidden, to believe what He hath taught, and to practiſe what He hath commanded. Nobody can promiſe for Infants abſolutely, that they ſhall do theſe Things; but only, that they ſhall be inſtructed and admoniſhed to do them: and, it is hoped, not in vain. This Inſtruction and Admonition, Parents are obliged by Nature to give; and if they do it effectually, God-Fathers and God-Mothers have no further Concern, than to be heartily glad of it. But if the former fail, the latter muſt ſupply the Failure, as far as they have Opportunity of doing it with any reaſonable Proſpect of Succeſs. For they were intended, not to releaſe the Parents from the Care of their Children, which nothing can: but for a double Security, in a Caſe of ſuch Importance.

If nothing at all had been promiſed in our Names, we had ſtill been bound, as ſoon as we were capable of it, to believe in God, and obey Him. But we are more

early and more firmly bound, as not only this hath been promiſed for us, but Care hath been taken to make us ſenſible of our Obligation to perform it: which Obligation therefore, Perſons are called upon, in the Queſtion under Conſideration, to ratify and confirm. And great Cauſe have they to anſwer, that they do. For doing it is a Duty, on which their eternal Felicity peculiarly depends: as a little Attention to what I am about to ſay will clearly ſhew you.

Our firſt Parents, even while they were innocent, had no Title to Happineſs, or to Exiſtence, but from God's Notification of his good Pleaſure: which being conditional, when they fell, they loſt it; and derived to Us a corrupt and mortal Nature, intitled to nothing; as both the Diſeaſes and the Poverty of Anceſtors often deſcend to their diſtant Poſterity. This bad Condition we fail not, from our firſt Uſe of Reaſon, to make worſe, in a greater or leſs Degree, by actual Tranſgreſſions: and ſo perſonally deſerve the Diſpleaſure, inſtead of Favour, of Him, who made us. Yet

we may hope, that, as He is good, He will on our Repentance forgive us. But then, as He is alſo juſt and wiſe, and the Ruler of the World; we could never know with Certainty, of ourſelves, what his Juſtice and Wiſdom and the Honour of his Government might require of Him with Reſpect to Sinners: whether He would pardon great Offences at all; and whether He would reward thoſe, whom He might be pleaſed not to puniſh. But moſt happily the Revelation of his holy Word hath cleared up all theſe Doubts of unaſſiſted Reaſon: and offered to the worſt of Sinners, on the Condition of Faith in Chriſt, added to Repentance, and productive of good Works (for all which He is ready to enable us,) a Covenant of Pardon for Sins paſt, Aſſiſtance againſt Sin for the future, and eternal Life in return for a ſincere, though imperfect, and totally undeſerving, Obedience.

The Method of entering into this Covenant is, being baptized in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt; that is, into the Acknowledgment of the

myſterious Union and joint Authority of theſe Three; and of the diſtinct Offices, which they have undertaken for our Salvation: together with a faithful Engagement of paying ſuitable Regard to each of them. In this Appointment of Baptiſm, the waſhing with Water aptly ſignifies, both our Promiſe to preſerve ourſelves, with the beſt Care we can, pure from the Defilement of Sin, and God's Promiſe to conſider us, as free from the Guilt of it. Baptiſm then, through his Mercy, ſecures Infants from the bad Conſequences of *Adam*'s Tranſgreſſion, giving them a new Title to the Immortality, which he loſt. It alſo ſecures, to Perſons grown up, the intire Forgiveneſs of their own Tranſgreſſions, on the Terms juſt mentioned. But then, in Order to receive theſe Benefits, we muſt lay our Claim to the Covenant, which conveys them: we muſt ratify, as ſoon as we are able, what was promiſed in our Name by others before we were able; and done for us then, only on Preſumption that we would make it our own Deed afterwards. For if we neglect, and appear

to

to renounce our Part of the Covenant, we have plainly not the leaſt Right to God's performing His: but we remain in our Sins, and *Chriſt ſhall profit us nothing* [b].

You ſee then of what unſpeakable Importance it is, that we take on ourſelves the Vow of our Baptiſm. And it is very fit and uſeful, that we ſhould take it in ſuch Form and Manner as the Office preſcribes. It is fit, that when Perſons have been properly inſtructed by the Care of their Parents, Friends, and Miniſters, they ſhould with joyful Gratitude acknowledge them to have faithfully performed that kindeſt Duty. It is fit, that before they are admitted by the Church of Chriſt to the holy Communion, they ſhould give public Aſſurance to the Church of their Chriſtian Belief and Chriſtian Purpoſes. This may alſo be extremely uſeful to themſelves. For conſider: young Perſons are juſt entering into a World full of Temptations, with no Experience, and little Knowledge to guard them; and much youthful Raſhneſs, to expoſe them. The Authority of others

[b] Gal. v. 2.

over them is beginning to leſſen, their own Paſſions to increaſe, *evil Communication* to have great Opportunities of *corrupting good Manners* [c]; and ſtrong Impreſſions, of one Kind or another, will be made on them very ſoon. What can then be more neceſſary, or more likely to preſerve their Innocence, than to form the moſt deliberate Reſolutions of acting right; and to declare them in a Manner, thus adapted to move them at the Time, and be remembered by them afterwards: in the Preſence of God, of a Number of his Miniſters, and of a large Congregation of his People, aſſembled with more than ordinary Solemnity for that very Purpoſe?

But then you, that are to be confirmed, muſt either do your own Part, or the whole of this Preparation will be utterly thrown away upon you. If you make the Anſwer, which is directed, without Sincerity, it is lying to God: if you make it without Attention, it is trifling with him. Watch over your Hearts therefore, and let them go along with your Lips. The two ſhort

[c] 1 Cor. xv. 33.

Words,

Words, *I do*, are ſoon ſaid: but they comprehend much in them. Whoever uſes them on this Occaſion, ſaith in Effect as follows. "*I do* heartily renounce all the "Temptations of the Devil; all the unlawful Pleaſures, Profits, and Honours "of the World; all the immoral Gratifications of the Fleſh. *I do* ſincerely believe, "and will conſtantly profeſs, all the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith. *I do* firmly "reſolve to keep all God's Commandments "all the Days of my Life; to love and "honour Him; to pray to Him and praiſe "Him daily in private; to attend conſcientiouſly on the public Worſhip and "Inſtruction, which He hath appointed; "to approach his holy Table, as ſoon as "I can qualify myſelf for doing it worthily; to ſubmit to his bleſſed Will meekly "and patiently in all Things; to ſet Him "ever before my Eyes, and acknowledge "Him in all my Ways. *I do* further reſolve, in the whole Courſe of my Behaviour amongſt my Fellow-Creatures, "to *do juſtly*, *love Mercy*[4], ſpeak Truth,

[4] Mic. vi. 8.

" be diligent and uſeful in my Station,
" dutiful to my Superiors, condeſcending
" to thoſe beneath me, friendly to my
" Equals; careful, through all the Rela-
" tions of Life, to act as the Nature of
" them requires, and conduct myſelf ſo to
" all Men, as I ſhould think it reaſonable
" that they ſhould to me in the like Caſe.
" Further yet: *I do* reſolve, in the Govern-
" ment of myſelf, to be modeſt, ſober,
" temperate, mild, humble, contented; to
" reſtrain every Paſſion and Appetite within
" due Bounds; and to ſet my Heart chiefly,
" not on the ſenſual Enjoyments of this
" tranſitory World, but the ſpiritual Hap-
" pineſs of the future endleſs one. Laſtly,
" *I do* reſolve, whenever I fail in any of
" theſe Duties, as I am ſenſible I have,
" and muſt fear I ſhall, to confeſs it before
" God with unfeigned Concern, to apply
" for his promiſed Pardon in the Name
" of his bleſſed Son, to beg the promiſed
" Aſſiſtance of his holy Spirit; and in that
" Strength, not my own, to ſtrive againſt
" my Faults, and watch over my Steps with
" redoubled Care."

Obſerve

Obſerve then: it is not Gloomineſs and Melancholy, that Religion calls you to: it is not uſeleſs Auſterity, and Abſtinence from Things lawful and ſafe: it is not extravagant Flights and Raptures: it is not unmeaning or unedifying Forms and Ceremonies: much leſs is it Bitterneſs againſt thoſe who differ from you. But the forementioned unqueſtionable ſubſtantial Duties are the Things to which you bind yourſelves, when you pronounce the awful Words, *I do.* Utter them then with the trueſt Seriouſneſs: and ſay to yourſelves, each of you, afterwards, as *Moſes* did to the *Jews*, *Thou haſt avouched the Lord this Day to be thy God, to walk in his Ways and keep his Statutes, and to hearken to his Voice: and the Lord hath avouched thee this Day to be His; that thou ſhouldſt keep all his Commandments, and be holy unto the Lord thy God, as He hath ſpoken*[a]. It is a certain Truth, call it therefore often to Mind, and fix it in your Souls, that if breaking a ſolemn Promiſe to Men be a Sin; breaking that which you make thus deliberately to God, would be unſpeakably a greater Sin.

[a] Deut. xxvi. 17, 18, 19.

But let us now proceed to the next Part of the Office: in which, after Perſons have confirmed and ratified the Vow of their Baptiſm, Prayers are offered up, that God would confirm and ſtrengthen them in their good Purpoſe: on both which Accounts this Appointment is called Confirmation.

Scripture teaches, and ſad Experience proves, that of *ourſelves we can do nothing; are not ſufficient*[f] for the Diſcharge of our Duty, without God's continual Aid: by which He can certainly influence our Minds, without hurting our natural Freedom of Will, and even without our perceiving it: for we can influence our Fellow Creatures ſo. Nor is it any Injuſtice in Him to require of us what exceeds our Ability, ſince He is ready to ſupply the Want of it. Indeed, on the contrary, as this Method of treating us is excellently fitted both to keep us humble, and yet to give us Courage, uſing it is evidently worthy of God. But then, as none can have Reaſon to expect his Help, but thoſe who earneſtly deſire it, ſo He hath promiſed to *give*

[f] John xv. 5. 2 Cor. iii. 5.

the

the holy Spirit only *to them that aſk Him*[g]. And to unite Chriſtians more in Love to each other, and incline them more to aſſemble for public Worſhip, our bleſſed Redeemer hath eſpecially promiſed, that *where two or three* of them *are gathered together in his Name, He will be in the Midſt of them*[h]. And further ſtill, to promote a due Regard in his People to their Teachers and Rulers, the ſacred Writings aſcribe a peculiar Efficacy to their praying over thoſe who are committed to their Charge. Even under the Jewiſh Diſpenſation, the Family of *Aaron* were told, that *them the Lord had ſeparated to miniſter unto Him, and to bleſs in the Name of the Lord*[i]: *and they ſhall put my Name*, ſaith God, *upon the Children of Iſrael, and I will bleſs them*[k]. No Wonder then, if under the Chriſtian Diſpenſation we read, but juſt before the Text, that the Apoſtles, *when they were come down to* Samaria, *prayed for* the new-baptized Converts, *that they might receive the Holy Ghoſt*; and in the Text, that they did receive it accordingly.

[g] Luke xi. 13. [h] Matth. xviii. 20. [i] Deut. x. 8. xxi. 5. [k] Numb. vi. 27.

There-

Therefore, purſuant to theſe great Authorities, here is, on the preſent Occaſion, a Number of young Diſciples, about to run the ſame common Race, met together to pray for themſelves and one another: here is a Number of elder Chriſtians, who have experienced the Dangers of Life, met to pray for thoſe who are juſt entering into them: here are alſo God's Miniſters, purpoſely come, to intercede with Him in their Behalf: and ſurely we may hope, their joint and fervent Petitions will avail, and be effectual.

They begin, as they ought, with acknowledging, and in Scripture Words, that *our Help is in the Name of the Lord, who hath made Heaven and Earth*[l]: *it is not in Man to direct his own Steps*[m]; but his Creator only can preſerve him. Then we go on to pronounce *the Name of the Lord bleſſed, henceforth World without End,* for his Readineſs to beſtow on us the Grace which we want. And laſtly, in Confidence of his Goodneſs, we intreat Him to *hear our Prayers, and let our Cry come unto Him*[n].

[l] Pſ. cxxiv. 8. [m] Jer. x. 23. [n] Pſ. cii. 1.

After

After theſe preparatory Ejaculations, and the uſual Admonition to be attentive, *Let us pray*; comes a longer Act of Devotion, which firſt commemorates God's Mercy already beſtowed, then petitions for an Increaſe of it. The Commemoration ſets forth, that He *hath regenerated theſe his Servants by Water and the Holy Ghoſt:* that is, intitled them by Baptiſm to the enlivening Influences of the Spirit, and ſo, as it were, begotten them again into a State, inexpreſſibly happier than their natural one; a Covenant-State, in which God will conſider them, whilſt they keep their Engagements, with peculiar Love, as his dear Children. It follows, that He *hath given unto them Forgiveneſs of all their Sins*; meaning, that He hath given them Aſſurance of it, on the gracious Terms of the Goſpel. But that every one of them hath actually received it, by complying with thoſe Terms ſince he ſinned laſt, tho' we may charitably hope, we cannot preſume to affirm: nor were theſe Words intended to affirm it; as the known Doctrine of the Church of *England* fully proves.

And

And therefore let no one miſunderſtand this Expreſſion in the Office, which hath parallel ones in the New Teſtament[o], ſo as either to cenſure it, or delude himſelf with a fatal Imagination, that any Thing ſaid over him can poſſibly convey to him a Pardon of Sins, for which he is not truly penitent. We only acknowledge, with due Thankfulneſs, that God hath done his Part: but which of the Congregation have done theirs, their own Conſciences muſt tell them.

After this Commemoration, we go on to requeſt for the Perſons before us, that God would *ſtrengthen them* againſt all Temptation, and ſupport them under all Affliction, by *the Holy Ghoſt the Comforter, and daily increaſe in them his manifold Gifts of Grace:* which Gifts we proceed to enumerate in ſeven Particulars, taken from the Prophet *Iſaiah*[p]; by whom they are aſcribed to our bleſſed Redeemer: but as *the ſame Mind* ought to *be in us, which was in Chriſt Jeſus*[q], a Petition for them was

[o] Eph. i. 7. Col. i. 14. [p] Iſa. xi. 2.
[q] Phil. ii. 5.

uſed,

uſed, in the Office of Confirmation, 1400 Years ago, if not ſooner. The ſeparate Meaning of each of the ſeven, it is neither eaſy nor needful to determine with Certainty. For indeed, if no more was deſigned, than to expreſs very fully and ſtrongly, by various Words of nearly the ſame Import, a pious and moral Temper of Mind: this is a Manner of ſpeaking both common and emphatical. But each of them may be taken in a diſtinct Senſe of its own. And thus we may beg for theſe our Fellow-Chriſtians, a *Spirit of Wiſdom*, to aim at the right End, the Salvation of their Souls: and *of Underſtanding*, to purſue it by right Means: *of Counſel*, to form good Purpoſes; and of *ghoſtly* or ſpiritual *Strength*, to execute them: *of* uſeful *Knowledge* in the Doctrines of Religion; *and true Godlineſs*, diſpoſing them to a proper Uſe of it. But chiefly, though laſtly, we pray, that they may be *filled with the Spirit of God's holy Fear:* with that Reverence of Him, as the greateſt and pureſt and beſt of Beings, the rightful Proprietor and juſt Judge of all, which will effectually excite them

them to whatever they are concerned to believe or do. For *the Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wiſdom*[r].

Having concluded this Prayer for them all in general, the Biſhop implores the Divine Protection and Grace for each one, or each Pair of them, in particular: that as he is already God's profeſſed *Child* and *Servant*, by the Recognition which he hath juſt made of his baptiſmal Covenant, ſo *he may continue his for ever*, by faithfully keeping it: *and*, far from decaying, *daily increaſe in his holy Spirit*, that is, in the Fruits of the Spirit, Piety and Virtue, *more and more*; making greater and quicker Advances in them, as Life goes on, *until he come to* that deciſive Hour, when his Portion ſhall be unchangeable *in God's everlaſting Kingdom*.

And, along with the Utterance of theſe ſolemn Words, he lays his Hand on each of their Heads: a Ceremony uſed from the earlieſt Ages by religious Perſons, when they prayed for God's Bleſſing on any one; uſed by our Saviour, who, when *Children*

[r] Pſ. cxi. 10.

were

were brought to Him, that He ſhould put his Hands on them, and pray, and bleſs them, was much diſpleaſed[s] with thoſe who forbad it; uſed by the Apoſtles, after Converts were baptized, as the Text plainly ſhews; reckoned in the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* among *the Foundations* of the Chriſtian Profeſſion[t]; conſtantly practiſed, and highly eſteemed in the Church from that Time to this; and ſo far from being a popiſh Ceremony, that the Papiſts adminiſter Confirmation by other Ceremonies of their own deviſing, and have laid aſide this primitive one; which therefore our Church very prudently reſtored. And the Cuſtom of it is approved, as apoſtolical, both by *Luther* and *Calvin*, and ſeveral of their Followers, though they raſhly aboliſhed it, as having been abuſed[u]. But I am credibly informed, that at *Geneva* it hath lately been reſtored.

The laying on of the Hand naturally expreſſes good Will and good Wiſhes in the

[s] Matth. xix. 13—15. Mark x. 13—16. [t] Heb. vi. 1.
[u] See Camfield's two Diſcourſes on Epiſcopal Confirmation. 8vo. 1682. p. 23—36.

Perſon who doth it: and in the preſent Caſe is further intended, as you will find in one of the following Prayers, to *certify thoſe*, to whom it is done, *of God's Favour and gracious Goodneſs towards them:* of which Goodneſs they will certainly feel the Effects, provided, which muſt always be underſtood, that they preſerve their Title to his Care by a proper Care of themſelves. This, it muſt be owned, is a Truth: and we may as innocently ſignify it by this Sign as by any other, or as by any Words to the ſame Purpoſe. Further Efficacy we do not aſcribe to it: nor would have you look on Biſhops, as having or claiming a Power, in any Caſe, to confer Bleſſings arbitrarily on whom they pleaſe; but only as petitioning God for that Bleſſing from above which He alone can give; yet, we juſtly hope, will give the rather for the Prayers of thoſe whom He hath placed over his People, unleſs your own Unworthineſs prove an Impediment. Not that you are to expect, on the Performance of this good Office, any ſudden and ſenſible Change in your Hearts, giving you, all at once, a remark-

able Strength or Comfort in Piety, which you never felt before. But you may reaſonably promiſe yourſelves, from going thro' it with a proper Diſpoſition, greater Meaſures, when real Occaſion requires them, of ſuch Divine Aſſiſtance as will be needful for your Support and orderly Growth in every Virtue of a Chriſtian Life.

And now, the Impoſition of Hands being finiſhed, the Biſhop and Congregation mutually recommend each other to God, and return to ſuch joint and public Devotions as are ſuitable to the Solemnity. The firſt of theſe is the Lord's Prayer: a Form ſeaſonable always, but peculiarly now; as every Petition in it will ſhew to every one who conſiders it. In the next Place, more eſpecial Supplications are poured forth, for the Perſons particularly concerned, to Him who alone can enable them *both to will and to do* what is *good*; that, as the Hand of his Miniſter hath been laid upon them, ſo *His fatherly Hand may ever be over them, and lead them in* the only Way, *the Knowledge and Obedience of his Word*, to *everlaſting*

ing Life. After this, a more general Prayer is offered up for them and the reſt of the Congregation together, that God would *vouchſafe,* unworthy as we all are, ſo *to direct and govern both our Hearts and Bodies,* our Inclinations and Actions, (for neither will ſuffice without the other) *in the Ways of his Laws, and in the Works of his Commandments,* that, *through his moſt mighty Protection, both here and ever, we may be preſerved in Body and Soul:* having the former, in his good Time, raiſed up from the Dead, and the latter made happy, in Conjunction with it, to all Eternity.

Theſe Requeſts being thus made, it only remains, that all be diſmiſſed with a ſolemn Bleſſing: which will certainly abide with you, unleſs, by wilful Sin or groſs Negligence, you drive it away. And in that Caſe, you muſt not hope, that your Baptiſm, or your Confirmation, or the Prayers of the Biſhop, or the Church, or the whole World, will do you any Service. On the contrary, every Thing which you might have been the better for, if you had made a good Uſe of it, you will be the

worſe for, if you make a bad one. You do well to renew the Covenant of your Baptiſm in Confirmation: but, if you break it, you forfeit the Benefit of it. You do well to repeat your Vows in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper: it is what all Chriſtians are commanded to do by their dying Saviour, *for the ſtrengthening and refreſhing of their Souls:* it is what I beg all, who are confirmed, will remember, and their Friends and Miniſters remind them of: the ſooner they are prepared for it, the happier; and by ſtopping ſhort, the Benefit of what preceded will be loſt. But if you are admitted to this Privilege alſo, and live wickedly, you do but *eat and drink your own Condemnation.* So that all depends on a throughly honeſt Care of your Hearts and Behaviour in all Reſpects.

Not that, with our beſt Care, we can avoid ſmaller Faults. And if we intreat Pardon for them in our daily Prayers, and faithfully ſtrive againſt them, they will not be imputed to us. But groſs and habitual Sins we may avoid, through God's Help: and if we fall into them, we fall from our

Title

Title to Salvation at the ſame Time. Yet even then our Caſe is not deſperate: and let us not make it ſo, by thinking it is: for, through the Grace of the Goſpel, we may ſtill repent and amend, and then be forgiven. But I beg you to obſerve, that, as continued Health is vaſtly preferable to the happieſt Recovery from Sickneſs; ſo is Innocence to the trueſt Repentance. If we ſuffer ourſelves to tranſgreſs our Duty; God knows whether we ſhall have Time to repent: God knows whether we ſhall have a Heart to do it. At beſt we ſhall have loſt, and more than loſt, the whole Time that we have been going back: whereas we have all Need to preſs forwards, as faſt as we can. Therefore let the innocent of wilful Sin preſerve themſelves ſo with the greateſt Circumſpection; and the Faulty return from their Errors without Delay. Let the Young enter upon the Way of Righteouſneſs with hearty Reſolution; and thoſe of riper Age perſevere in it to the End. In a Word, let us all, of every Age, ſeriouſly conſider, and faithfully practiſe, the Obligations of Religion.

For

For *the Vows of God are* ſtill *upon us*[w], how long ſoever it be ſince they were firſt made, either by us, or for us: and it is in vain to forget what He will aſſuredly remember; or hope to be ſafe in neglecting what He expects us to do. But let us uſe proper Diligence; and He will infallibly give us proper Aſſiſtance, and *confirm us* all *unto the End, that we may be blameleſs in the Day of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*[x].

Now unto Him, who is able to keep us from falling, and to preſent us faultleſs before the Preſence of his Glory with exceeding Joy, to the only wiſe God, our Saviour, be Glory and Majeſty, Dominion and Power, both now and ever. Amen[y].

[w] Pſ. lvi. 12. [x] 1 Cor. i. 8. [y] Jude 24, 25.

THE END.

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